





HASSAN THE BASH CHAUSH AND HIS ORDERLY

# **TURKEY IN TRAVAIL**

## **The Birth of a New Nation**

By

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**WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS AND  
TWO MAPS**

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## INTRODUCTION

POETS and philosophers have thought and sung of the mutability of human affairs.

In all the coloured Romance of History there is hardly a story so illustrative of this mutability, so fantastic, so dramatic, as that of Turkey during the last eight years. The Fates allowed me to follow that story closely step by step and often in intimate relations with its chief actors and its chief events.

I have written herein no chronological and exhaustive history. It is an account of personal adventure jotted down in odd places at odd times and often about odd events. But through them all runs the thread of History on which they form a strange and quaintly assorted chaplet.

I came in close contact with the Turk in 1916, in the hour of defeat. Germany had swept forward in one tremendous drive. Austria-Hungary was her assistant. She had torn to pieces her enemies in the Balkans and collected the rest to her as her allies. She had swept into Turkey

and taken control, and so across Asia Minor and down into Mesopotamia and Bagdad. With her assistance the Turks had hurled back the British and inflicted on them the severe defeats of Gallipoli and Kut-al-Amarah. On the Western front the Allies battered in vain with useless and bloody frontal attacks. On the Eastern front the Russians had shown their weakness, and the Caucasus armies were in full retreat. From the Baltic, across Central Europe through the Balkans and Turkey to Jerusalem and Bagdad and the Caucasus, Germany was supreme. The overpowering hand of the Black Empire held the Old World half-strangled in its terrific grip. To many acute neutral observers the Allies appeared to be defeated.

In captivity I saw the dissolution of the old Ottoman Empire. I returned to freedom to share the stupendous victory of the Allies. I found everywhere thrust and energy and enthusiasm and ideals.

The Near East, torn into strips, waited placidly to have its future decided. A great opportunity was given to the Allies, but they showed themselves incapable and unworthy of it. The Ottoman Empire, crushed and defeated, begging only for peace and security, lay at their feet.

By folly and procrastination and by national

jealousies the Allies allowed the fruits of success to rot. The Greeks were sent crusading into Anatolia and were defeated and Greece was dealt a disastrous blow.

Out of the débris of the Ottoman Empire, through a thousand difficulties burst a Turkish Nation. As wild and destructive as any volcano newly in eruption, it rent its way out into the open. It suffered the agonies of a fierce war of self-preservation. As the Allies grew disunited and weak, it grew strong and arrogant, until there came the day when with a mailed fist it threatened the peace of the World and dictated its own terms to the impotent Powers.

In the black months of 1916 I came as a prisoner to Constantinople. I returned to it on the crest of the wave of victory and hope. I crept away with the Allied Forces of Occupation in the hour of defeat and dishonour, in the face of a triumphant Turkish Nation, and behind that nation the threat of a new Asia roused and revengeful.

## NOTE

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# TURKEY IN TRAVAIL



## CHAPTER I

### First Contact with the Turks : the Defence of Kut-al-Amarah, 1916

**I**T was the 3rd of December 1915, and three of us stood leaning against a low mud-wall amongst palm trees. We strained our eyes staring out across the empty desert that lay all around Kut-al-Amarah. A mongoose, in his jerky way, came out to look at us, and the pariah dogs growled and bit, as the fleas ran through their long, coarse coats. Out of the distance came the rumble and grunts of far-off guns. The morning mists had dissolved, and the heat had begun to shudder across the plains. Far up the bank of the Tigris river a low cloud of dust hung heavily in the air. The haze took strange, gigantic shapes and then formed down into a column of waggons, guns, and men marching towards us. It was the head of the VIth Division retreating from Bagdad.

As defence officer of the town I had much to do, but I watched these troops with interest. There is a chill about failure, and for the first time they were feeling the numbing cold of defeat. They came in bedraggled, dispirited, utterly weary after their long retreat. Here

and there springless, bumping mule-carts drove in with wounded, twisted with the agony of great, raw open wounds. From Basra these troops had fought and advanced invincible from victory to victory, and full of hope and enthusiasm. They had grown even arrogant with success, stalking through a submissive countryside, taking great risks and justifying the taking; and then on the threshold of Bagdad they had been forced to retreat. With the mutilating Arab close at hand and the Turks behind them they had been inspired into the one great concentrated effort of plodding back to Kut-al-Amarah. The driving stimulus of success was gone. Now they came in just weary human beings, instinctively searching for food and safety; and in Kut they found mud-huts and a chance to sit down and eat and rest. They sat down and thanked God for the chance, but they got up no more. The momentum was gone out of the force, and out of its commander. Like a camel in the mud this tired division slipped down and lay firmly still.

Kut was no more than a bottle of which the broad, deep and swift Tigris river formed the sides and the bottom. It controlled, however, the roads into the country beyond. Behind us lay 300 miles of unprotected communications and half Mesopotamia conquered, but not held. Defeat had left this one small division isolated in the great desert. There were promises of distant reinforcements. Determined to hold them back as far as possible and save what had already been won, we turned and faced the Turks.

We had not long to wait, for very soon the distant

sandhills were black with Turks. It seemed certain that they would attack, and there was little to prevent them coming straight in. Our tired men were persuaded with difficulty to dig. They scratched themselves a few shallow pits to hide in, until they were relieved. They knew little about trenches or their value. But the Turks missed their chance. They settled down to dig, and indulged in long-range artillery bombardment of the town. They came on warily, but with a line of trenches and a few men they effectively inserted the cork and bottled us securely in Kut.

Hope and energy revived on good and plentiful food. Soon the trenches grew in the hard-baked ground and we began the underground life of trench warfare. There was a belief that we had only to keep the Turk out and hold our own for a few days, and then the relieving forces would join hands with us, and together we should hurl back the enemy and march triumphant into Bagdad. We prepared each day to resist and repel attacks, but the Turk did no more than sap steadily up to our lines. He made only two determined assaults, and he was flung back with heavy losses.

For a while there was muddle and disorganization. The ground was baked to the hardness of brick, and digging was slow. Communication trenches did not exist, and in the drought of the late Eastern autumn we were parched for want of water. Time and again I watched a faithful water-carrier try to get a skinful from the river and I saw him shot as he hurried and stumbled over the open to his regiment. There was little or no medical arrangement, for the medical services

were under-staffed and under-supplied. Wounded men lay hours unattended. Food was plentiful and freely wasted. Occasions arose when an observation post was built of sacks of white Indian flour and shell-holes in protecting mud-walls were filled with boxes of jam and butter. There were 6,000 Arabs left in the town, and unhindered they stole as they pleased. When any man in the regiments in the fort on the right of the line felt inclined, he dug here in the walls for butter and there for jam and with a little flour made himself weird pastries and threw most of them away because his belly was full.

We had not learnt the art of building dug-outs, and with little shelter we lived under the open sky. We learnt the shapes of the moon and how its light might mean attacks and death, and how its absence meant the strain of listening and watching into the dark. We learnt the joy of sunlight, when the strain was over. We knew the way the stars rise and wheel across the sky, and the light fleecy clouds that come with wind and those that carry rain. We unlearnt the delicacy and ignorance of those who live in houses and we became as primitive as the Mother Earth in which we lived. For the minute we were buoyed up with hope and the belief in success. We had no serious thought for tomorrow. This was only to be a temporary check. .

The new year came in with rain that chilled the enthusiasm out of the troops. As before we had been dried up with drought, now we slept in mud and strove with water. The Tigris rose and came flooding down our trenches, and both we and the enemy, who were

now only a few yards away, were forced to evacuate and retreat. I had one glorious half-hour, for in front of me the Turks had to go first and we mowed them down in bundles as they staggered away over the flooded ground. Then we retired. We were wet to the armpits. An ice-cold wind came sweeping down from the snows on the great mountains of the Pushti-Ku. Oblivious of the snipers' bullets, all night we paced to keep alive, or huddled under ground-sheets in little holes that we scratched in the sodden ground. Dawn came cold and cheerless with a grey sky. An informal truce prevailed as we dug ourselves into safety where the ground was not water-logged. Many of the Indians were frozen stiff; and for myself my hands had swollen up like great potatoes, and the scratches and scars stood out on them black and beastly like eyes in potatoes. The sun! We prayed for the sun. Like a grey inverted bowl the clouds slowly swung back, and the sun came out, and then as we felt its first joy of warmth the clouds swung back again grey and dreary as before.

The enemy had gone back a thousand yards, and between us there was a sea of water. The danger of attack was over. The hope of success was dying. The long siege settled down to its dull, grey monotony. It became as eventless as a schoolboy's diary. There was no rest, no going back to comfortable billets as in France, but always the crack and flip of snipers' bullets and the drone of shells. The hospital gave no protection to the wounded, for it was bombed and fired on. It was no more than an Arab house, with staff offices and gun emplacements on all sides of it.

I lay there in terror when ill, for the enemy's shells burst just over or just short of it all day, and the enemy's aeroplanes dropped bombs close by, and bullets came with a thud into its mud-walls. From a window I could see down a bullet-swept street. One day an Arab woman sauntered by with a child and a bullet killed it while it slept in her arms. She made no sign that she understood, but nursed it the livelong day. Sometimes she put down the little limp body in a doorway and called to it and mocked it and enticed it to come and play; and then she would croon over it and hum it a sleeping song of her people. That day she played with it, and that night beneath my window she hummed her tuneless cradle song, till I heard her cry that her child was dead and the noise of her tearing her hair and clothes as she called on her God, while a man persuaded her to come into safety. It took me back suddenly to the mountains and the pines above Simla, when I had seen a mam-monkey drop her child out of a tree and play with it like the Arab woman and croon over it and lay it down and call to it all a summer's day, and then when the tribe came near she had caught up the limp body and raced chattering and crying along the tree-tops.

As time passed our hope began to die. Uncertainty sapped the strength of loyalty and discipline. Food began to become scarce and communiqués from General Head Quarters increased in number and in promises, till the troops laughed at each new one.

So we came to the month of March. Already the grass was growing and coming, rich and fresh and green, above the parapets, and here and there was a clump

of flowers. Food had grown scarcer and scarcer, till we were down to starvation rations. Hopes were fed on the continuous grunts of the guns of the relieving force far down stream and the crazy old aeroplanes that at times flew over. Starved men look out on a grey world, and monotony and uncertainty breed despair. Now and again, when relief appeared to be near, there would be a tiring burst of excitement. Hope would flare up and then die down again wearily into the old monotony.

The men had grown terribly weak. They had begun to lose heart and desertions and courts-martial were frequent. The ratio of all things had changed. Money was of little value. A sack of silver rupees dropped by an aeroplane excited interest only because it had, with poetic justice, fallen on and killed a Supply and Transport sergeant and conductor. The discipline of the Army Act was gone, and stick and fist took its place; for what did a man care for court-martial and fourteen years' hard labour when his belly was empty and he had only his moustache to chew on, and when men fell down exhausted under the weight of a rifle and 100 rounds of ammunition. Morning after morning a firing squad shot a prisoner behind the fort wall at dawn. Crimes took on a new aspect. Murder was far less than the theft of food. There was one poor devil who had eaten his piece of dark barley bread and refused, because he was a Dogra-Brahmin, to eat the horse-meat that completed his rations, and then he stole and was hand-cuffed and shut into the guard-room. While the guard slept—and now all the guards slept—he

crawled to the sack of dirty flour that held a week's rations for his company and, gnawing a way through, sucked out a pound of flour, and his choking, as the dry flour throttled him, woke the guard.

Then there came upon us some of the plagues of Egypt. With each shower of rain came myriads of frogs, that croaked and hopped till they fell by thousands into the trenches. There, trapped, they sat in multitudes and popped as men trod on them or died of thirst when the sun came out. They lay and rotted, till the stench of dead frogs grew more sickly to empty stomachs than rotting barley or dead corpses of men. Before us in the barbed wire were the bodies of many dead Turks mummified by the desert air. With the spring, the mummies died, and the world became full of great evil blue flies that frequent butchers' shops.

Lice came by the million and crawled in indecency. Dysentery and scurvy and enteritis, which is little less than cholera, killed the men. Despair and monotony and hunger got hold of us. There was disease, starvation, desertion, crime, despair, and over all the drone of the 40 lb. shells and the crack of the snipers' bullets.

Confined as we were in so small an area, nothing could be kept secret or quiet. Mistakes made were glaringly obvious, and the troops became querulous and critical. They criticized the lack of precautions taken to protect the food supply, and the presence of the large thieving Arab population who had to be fed at their expense. They pointed out that in all this siege no attempt to break out had been made, nor had any help been given to the relieving force. They criticized the

Supply Services and the continuous altering of the date up to which we could last, which had driven the relieving force to expend its strength in bits and gave it no time to concentrate for one big blow. The British soldier, in his own grouching grumpy way, stood the strain magnificently. The Indian officer and the sepoy lost heart more quickly.

But I would not include all in this sweeping statement. By the grace of God and the aid of a scamp of a British private, I found buried in the fort wall one of the tins of crude sugar which had been used as a rivetment in a shell-hole early in the siege. The sugar was sweet and strong and worth its weight twice over in pure gold. I placed it in the hands of Ali Khan, the Mess Havildar. Now Ali Khan had many faults. He was a dull Punjabi Mussulman, long and thin and angular with a tendency to argue and avoid obeying orders. Each day I doled out half an ounce of precious sugar to each officer. Each day I weighed the tin and its contents, where it was kept in the Havildar's dug-out. Ali Khan was starving and he could hardly move for the great weariness that starvation brings. The Genoese cook, whose fat hung on him now in loose folds, and others who knew what was in that tin, watched it with hungry eyes and tempted Ali Khan, but during six long dreary weeks he sat guard over it and saw that not one ounce went astray. One night, after the sugar was long since finished, Ali Khan was sent to handle some bombs. The bombs blew up and all that was left of Ali Khan was strips of flesh on the sides of a trench. May God collect his scattered remnants and let him into Paradise !

The end grew near. The spring was coming clean and fresh with the undefinable kick of new life in the air. Far up in the Persian hills the snow was melting and the river had risen into a gigantic flood that covered the land and cut off all hope of relief. The duck came fleeing over us on their way to the breeding grounds. The linnets flirted and played across the trenches as they paired. A snake or two rustled through the grass above our heads, and the parapets of the trenches were carpeted thick with luscious grasses and scented flowers. But down in the trenches it was dark, weary monotony. I could smell those trenches, stale, full of disease and death and dirt and foulness and despair and tired, starved men who cared little for life or death. I could feel, almost touch, Spring. The songs of the birds and the hum of insects and the great swollen river spoke of surging life, but down in the earth we were imprisoned underground. We were already half buried, while life surged over us.

I slept lightly as one hungry, and Subedar Rahmet Ali called me softly to come and see. In the rose flush before dawn a sickle moon was sliding down the sky. Almost within its horns glowed a great bright star. I could hear my Punjabi Mussulmans whispering together, "The Star and Crescent of the Prophet." From the Turkish trenches opposite a Mullah called loud and clear the Morning Call to Prayer. Subedar Rahmet Ali was praying; and suddenly, as a stranger, as one shut out, as one lost in the vastness of Asia, I felt lonely. Months later I met Rahmet Ali in prison, suffering because he would not do homage to the Sultan of Turkey, and I was glad and comforted.

## CHAPTER II

### Surrender

**I**T was late April, and at last the end had come. The morning of the 29th dawned dull and hot and still. I was away before dawn in the palm-groves destroying regimental records, and burning rifles and ammunition in the dug-outs there. The air was full of futile pops and loud explosions. With a loud droning whirr, half a breech-block from a burst gun sailed over, wiped away the head of one of a number of Arabs who sat watching us, and buried itself in a pile of tents. The rest of the Arabs, still eyeing us like scavenger dogs, moved rapidly away. As they passed, one picked up a rifle from a pile and made off. I made after him. The cur snarled back at me and threatened me, and his friends closed in evilly on me from each side. I was working in my shirt-sleeves and was unarmed. I could see murder in their cruel eyes. Snatching up an axe that lay close by I made at the man, and the steel bit into his skull as into a pine log. The snarl went out of the faces of his companions. They salaamed respectfully and disappeared.

We had almost completed our work when I saw that the Arab population was streaming out of the

town. I stepped out of the palm-groves to look and there over the open, where for many months no one had dared to walk, came small bodies of men. They were the Turks.

I was disappointed. They were dirty, unshaved, ill-dressed, ragged rascallions of men. I was piqued that we should have surrendered to so tatterdemalion a crew. I had not yet realized that it is only the British soldier who loses his military efficiency when he is dirty.

They came in methodically, taking up posts from where they commanded all entrances and exits. The Arabs were shouting with delight, leaping and salaaming and offering them food. They had not starved, these Arabs, by the look of them, and they were offering fresh mutton and white bread free as gifts of peace. The Turks were but little impressed. When they got in the way they drove them on one side. They had had many proofs of their loyalty before. I could have thanked a mounted officer who kicked full in the mouth an Arab who tried to kiss his boot. It was ever so with these Arabs; they sung songs to and cringed before the victors and mutilated the wounded of the defeated.

I fell in my men and moved off to our rendezvous. Then I realized that we were prisoners, for we were roughly halted by dirty fellows and searched and disarmed. At every few yards we had to stop and beg leave to advance from apathetic and supercilious young officers. My whole spirit revolted, for I had never learnt to cringe.

We concentrated in the palm-groves by the river-bank. There we spent a night of terror. For the first time for many years I was defenceless and unarmed. We had eaten no food at all that day, and the heart sinks when the belly is empty. A low thick fog lay over everything, and out of it now and again loomed groups of men on horses, uncanny and terrible, because they were unknown and spoke in a strange tongue. We set sentries with sticks, who would have been useless in real danger, but it seemed better to be wakened than to be murdered in our sleep.

At last that long night came to an end, and in the dawn I dropped asleep, to be wakened by the sound of a scuffle. A short sturdy Turk was endeavouring to tear his water-bottle away from a huge Sikh. The sepoy looked to me for protection. Suddenly I realized that I was helpless ; and I was ashamed. A little way off sat a Turkish officer on the side of a water-wheel. I ran to him and called his attention in French, which by the grace of God he more or less understood. He called to his Turk to leave the water-bottle alone. He strode up to the man and beat him on the face. But the fellow obstinately carried on. The officer's hand flew to his belt, but his revolver was not there. Seeing a pickaxe lying near he caught it up and drove the point through the man.

Towards late afternoon we filed out of Kut. The Turks had told us that if we got to Shamran, some eight miles away, we should find food. The Turkish commander Khalil Pasha and his Staff, with the German officers on it, watched us march out in fours. Right

under his eyes Turkish soldiers looted our men, and when I called to him and told him, he shrugged his shoulders and said something to his Germans, and they all laughed together.

That night was a veritable nightmare. We marched in by brigades and regiments of an unarmed army. We arrived in the dark. Our food was a great pile of dry biscuits. They were being issued by a staff-sergeant with the aid of a candle that flickered in the soft night air. Outside the ring of light moved a swaying mass of men. They had starved for two months, and had eaten nothing for thirty-six hours. Now and again they would surge in like wolves snatching at the biscuits, and every officer and sergeant in the ring would strike and kick and force them back out to the edge of the poor light. The biscuits were hard and dried and no more than coarse compressed porridge that should have been boiled. Eaten hard they swelled in the stomachs, contracted with long fasting, and so killed the men in agony. It was a sorry, pitiful dance of death, to fight for a rough hard biscuit, to munch it and die as if poisoned: a dance of death round a few candles that flickered in the night air.

For myself, I nibbled my biscuit and, worn out, dropped asleep on the ground and woke in the sun to see them carrying those who had died in the night, away to shallow pits in the long grass by the river bank.

We rested a day or two, and from down-stream came a British hospital ship loaded with rich food. It landed its cases and then steamed away again. For three days I fed on plum-pudding and champagne cider and mixed

them with rich tinned foods and then bathed in the river and lazed in the sun. But the rich food killed many men with weaker stomachs, and the rough hospital was full of sick. On three sides of us the Turkish pickets made three rings and on the fourth there was the river in flood. I pondered the chances of escape. To pass the guards and swim the river would be difficult, and beyond that were the miles of desert with the evil mutilating Arab. In despair I put the idea aside.

At last our turn to go up to Bagdad had come. Officers and men were separated. They were our men and they were being taken away to be ill-used and starved and beaten and forced to work in such conditions that few of them were to win out alive to the Peace. Helpless as children, they crowded to the river bank while we embarked. They cried to us good-bye, so that when we were far out of sight we could still hear their calls.

There was little room on the ships, but the Turkish officers on board tried to make us comfortable. They told us of all the delights of Bagdad and made us lavish promises of the life we were to lead with hotels and theatres and dances and beautiful women and many things that had become vague and distant. It is a curious trait among the Turks to tell these quiet effective lies, which are of no use to anyone, but calculated to please the listener. We had not yet learned that they handled words, as it were, like coloured threads, to be woven into what pattern their imagination suggested, but without reference to facts or realities. They were polite, these Turkish officers, and I felt that they looked on us English much as we look on Americans and Aus-

tralians, as a people full of bustle and money and new ideas, but virile and rough and without manners.

As we passed villages, the Arabs came racing out hallooing and howling and indicating with lewd gestures the foul mutilations they would perpetrate. They had greeted the VIth Division, as it advanced, as their saviours. The Turkish officers aboard looked at them with dislike and spat over the side of the ship. We had seen the Turkish wounded brought in mutilated as we advanced. Call it what you will, "Mesopotamia," "Irak," "the cradle of civilization," it is no more than an empty, dusty, barren desert with two great rivers ribbed with strips of green fields and with marshes. It is an evil land full of the plagues of Egypt, and scattered over it are a treacherous, dirty, despicable, evil people. Here and there it is believed that oil lies hidden, and so men and money are squandered on it. Long afterwards, when the peace came, the British Government sent men full of ideals to form a stable good government in Irak. They worked hard, but met with revolt and hatred. They never realized that the Arabs wanted no good stable government, and that they will stand no control.

On the second day we landed at Bagdad, and our Turkish officers departed and took with them all their glowing promises. We were formed into a column and marched slowly through the principal streets. On each side from roadway to roof-tops were banked masses of people who watched us in dead silence. The Turks had given orders for silence, and so well do they understand how to enforce their orders that, surrounded

by this vast crowd, I could hear the pad of our own feet in the thick dust and, as we passed under the great gateway, the sound of a stork who sat perched on her ponderous nest on a broken minaret and cracked with her beak in disapproval. Bagdad was no more than the ordinary Mesopotamian village enlarged, with its twisting, dirty alleys of streets and its dark covered bazaars full of tiny open shops.

For a while we lodged in the long cavalry barracks that were foul from the remains of successive regiments of Turks. Already the stale smell of the coming summer was in the air and we were glad to get orders to board the train that starts on the road to Constantinople. There were ninety miles of solid railway built with all the German strength and forethought and precision. It showed the ambition of Germany, and under the heavy hand of her dictatorship this land might have blossomed like a rose. But the Germans had started building the end of the renowned railway from Berlin to Bagdad before they had finished the middle. So we alighted at the seedy village of Samarra, and there close by the station we slept in cattle pens, into which at night they drove oxen. The Turks tried, almost pathetically, to treat us well. They allowed us to transport great bundles of our kit as far as here. But their standards of life and their ways and ours were different, and they soon gave up the attempt.

Everywhere where man had enclosed a bit of land, the dirt of Samarra was thick and foul, but in the open the scavengers of nature cleaned all with care. It was the kingdom of beetles. I never believed that so many

existed. From every quarter they came hurrying in, rolling the filth of men and animals into neat balls and racing away on the wind with them. Jackals, hawks, dogs, ants and beetles and the eating sun cleaned up the refuse, while man did nothing but befoul: except perhaps when, over-troubled and irritated, an Arab might put his shirt on an ants' nest and so delouse it.

Our energy and courage were coming back and with them came the spirit of lawlessness, which is a prisoner's privilege—the fierce resentment against all and every order. The Turks had given up the make-believe of treating us well. We had to conform to the conditions of the country. When ordered to set out on the march, we obstinately refused. We demanded to be allowed to transport all our kit, and it would have taken a regiment of horses to have done this. We argued and resisted and refused to move until, towards late evening, the Turkish commandant, in despair, brought us more pack animals and then we agreed to move off.

The sun was already low, and out of the sunset came racing a great black cloud of dust and rain that whistled and tore at the world and filled the air with darkness. In the village stood the Mosque of Omar with its dome which had been covered with plates of brass by a pious Persian Shah. We stood in raging darkness. The sun was hidden, but it struck through the storm and the great bronze dome of the Mosque glowed close above us like a red-hot inverted bowl, in the wild darkness. Then, wet through, we trudged away into the night and the unknown.

## CHAPTER III

### The March into Captivity

**O**F that march I cannot write a pleasant history with neat notes on historical places and pictures of scenery and of men. We travelled the length of upper Mesopotamia into Kurdistan, past a hundred cities of renown, across the breadth of Cilicia, and then far up into Anatolia till we came to Kustamouni below the Black Sea. In all we travelled perhaps some 1,600 miles. I can give no consecutive account of times and places. With a halt here and there and a day's rest now and again, we trudged solidly mile after mile until we became as the animals. For myself the great facts of life were hunger and thirst and an aching desire to rest. I had no clear thinking, but only a dull instinct that I must go on, and that ahead there was water and food and sleep. The training of the public schools, the veneer and polish of modern life and civilization disappeared, and we were primitive in our dealings one with another. Like an animal I trudged forward, eating when I could find food, drinking water foul or clear, tired but with an insistent subconscious instinct of fear that if I stopped I should fall into the hands of the mutilating Arab. Here and

there incidents stood out vividly and remained clear.

We halted for the first long halt at the village of Tekreet. There, as we entered the gates, the Arabs spat on us and stoned us, until we reached a stretch of sandy beach on the river's edge. Above us were tall cliffs and on the top a line of open cafés, in which the whole population sat the live-long day and jabbered and called to each other.

On that beach we found a few of our soldiers who had been captured earlier. They were dying of dysentery ; and there they lay uncared for and untended on the naked sand under the pitiless June sun. When we helped them to crawl into the shade under the cliffs the Arabs stoned them out again into the sun. Later we heard that our men came here by the hundreds, until this beach was black with men crawling because they could not stand. Under the raging July sun they died of dysentery and enteritis, while the Arabs gloated over them and looted them, and the Turks sat stolidly by, giving no help because they had no help to give.

We were ahead, but behind us came our men, and all that long desert road was strewn with their bodies where they fell : some murdered, some too weak to walk, some killed by disease ; and the jackals and the crows fed on them after the Arabs had finished their bestialities and looted their bodies.

Sometimes we passed battalions of Turkish troops marching down to Bagdad. Often they marched on the " go as you please " system, by which they formed up in some town such as Aleppo. There a ration would be dealt out to each man and orders given to make for

Bagdad, some 300 miles away. The first few files would stick together, and then the regiment would string out into small parties, and finally into single men limping along.

These the Arabs watched, and when occasion served, they killed and looted them, so that we passed many corpses of Turkish soldiers on the route. They lay by the roadside with their throats cut, left to rot like carrion for all their officers or their Government cared ; while far away in Anatolia the women waited eagerly, but in vain, for news of their men. Underfed, misused, paid but little and that rarely, ragged and dirty, these Turkish troops were as wretched in their liberty as we were in our captivity.

Their animals suffered equally. We halted one night close by the bivouac of a cavalry regiment. In the grey light before dawn I was awaked by heavy breathing and felt warm breath on my cheek. Up against the sky over me stood a great horse gaunt and monstrous with under-feeding and neglect. He was an English cavalry charger. He cropped a little at the dry desert grass. Then he nosed with his wet muzzle and blew as he scented British blood and the British smell in the men sleeping round me and he whinnied and neighed with delight. And there he stayed contentedly until a rough evil Turkish trooper with the face of a Tartar came and took him away. But as he went the old horse looked back and called to us again, as fellow-prisoners.

While we followed the Tigris river there was plenty, and water to drink and chances to bathe. We learnt to love it dearly and dreaded to leave it. We had gone up

past the village of Hammam Ali where there are sulphur and petrol springs in which the rich sick come to bathe ; and then we swung into the desert and clambered up a rough track over low stone hills. The only water was from a pool or two rank with sulphur which gave no relief, but left the mouth foul as after fever. We trudged all day and with but little rest throughout the night, because water was far ahead. Towards midnight the plain in front became alive with red lights, and when we came near we saw that it was a prairie fire. Our road ran through it, and we marched with the grass crackling and blazing close on each side of us. When morning came we were still trudging forward with blackened faces and eyes sore with smoke ; and the fierce sun came up to dry out of us the little moisture left by the fire. I was parched and prayed to see the kindly Tigris river again.

Close beside me with his shoulders forward as if he carried a weight staggered a colonel. His face was ashen grey and white with weariness and his eyes blood-shot and unseeing. A huge Scotsman, a captain in an Indian regiment, swung up to him, picked him up like a child, brushed aside the driver who disagreed, and sat him among the kit on a pack-pony. And there with wide-open, unseeing eyes he sat, while the Scotsman strode behind to watch that the Arab did not throw him off.

The plain turned to rolling hills and they called to us that water was near. Our guards rode lazily on sturdy stallions, and, knowing the route, they had tied long skins of water under their ponies' girths. Still the

unending dusty road wound away into the distance. Once I stepped on one side to avoid a hole and I trod on a snake. He was gorged and a lump showed that he was newly fed. A foot away was a sand-grouse's nest full of eggs. Eagerly, with eyes watching that no one took them away from me, I ate the eggs hurriedly. They were set and about to hatch, but in my life I have tasted nothing so sweet as the raw wet meat in those eggs.

At last we reached the low range of hills that lies above Mosul, and as we came down the slope in the dawn, the city lay below us. A soft mist from the river gave the picture beauty. The minarets and the mosques shone golden in the sun. Beyond it lay the ruins of Nineveh. It was pleasant to come down into its dark, shaded, twisting streets. We were back in the age of the great Khalifs. The mysteries of the Arabian Nights were there, and the Street of the Rope-Makers and the Hunchback and the latticed windows with their promise of black-eyed veiled women watching. We were in another age, so that when we came to the cavalry barracks in the great square we found one of our interpreters had preceded us, for he was hung in chains over the main gate, as a warning.

We lodged foully in those barracks where vermin and filth were plentiful. The open country was better, and we were glad once more to move off.

We left the Tigris behind us with many deep regrets, for in all this hard, cruel land it alone had shown itself kind. We went westwards through parched open plains till we came to the village of Nisibin, and in

this oasis we rested. It is a village of Jews, and full of gardens and trees. We bought eggs and fresh milk and slept in a green meadow beside a stream, where the fish came catching flies and it was good to bathe. The green came pleasant to the eyes, tired with staring under the sun out over burnt-up plains.

Beyond Nisibin lay the same great plain. In times of peace it should have been full of corn and barley, for this is a rich land, but the Turks had massacred the Armenians. As far as the eye could see stood corn uncut and untended, shrivelling in the sun. We passed ruined villages where the wells were full of bodies and where bodies lay in the torn and burnt houses. On every side there was desolation and ruin and the population driven away or murdered. Being thirsty, I ran to get a drink from a spring that bubbled and laughed its way out of a cave beneath two trees. The water came out foul, for the cave was full of dead bodies.

On the whole I was beast-like and unmoved, but occasionally some incident would rouse me. In the plain beyond Nisibin we met a body of Turkish gendarmes, who stopped for a while to talk to our guards and then pushed on again. One of them carried a whip and as he swung into his saddle he flicked a woman who sat resting and drove her into a trot before him. My blood boiled with impotent rage. They were selling these Armenian women for a few shillings in the bazaars of Aleppo and Mosul.

We had not gone many miles before the British orderlies came to me, because I knew the language. White with anger, they told me how that a mile back they had found

a British soldier lying near the road almost dead of dysentery and that one of our guards, who was an Arab, had put sand into the sick man's mouth and so murdered him. I too was angry, and I spoke with the Arab and cursed him fiercely, and he was surprised and even indignant.

"What!" he said, "that man would have died this night and the jackals would have been at his feet while he was yet alive!" He was doing a kindness in his own way, and so far apart were our ways of thought that there was no means of bridging the gulf.

When there was water handy we halted and slept beside it. After one such halt, as we moved off, we found that a new body of men had joined us. They were sepoys and Indian followers. They were starved and nearly naked. One had no more than a puttee, and this he had wound round his loins. His ribs stood out as in a famine. We examined them carefully, and one by one we recognized them as deserters. Our guards cursed them. Our men would have nothing to do with them. They would give them no food nor money. After a meal they cleaned up every crumb, so that even an ant might not find a piece of food. They drove them back behind us, and so one by one the deserters fell out and in the open desert paid their penalty.

At Ras-al-Ain we met the head of the railway as it crept, like some great caterpillar, slowly down across Asia towards Bagdad, the railway that was to be the key to the East. We followed its track across the Euphrates and so down into the great city of Aleppo.

We were lodged in little hotels that were hardly less

foul than the cavalry barracks of Bagdad, and they were far more cramped, for we were not allowed out. When the time came to settle our accounts, we were warned that if we did not pay we should be forced to stay there until we did. The stale stench of those hotels was sufficient. We paid gladly to get once more out on to the open road. We travelled by train to the foot of the Amanus Mountains and climbed over them on foot. We marched in a pitch-dark night, and I found myself soon far ahead of the column. Behind me came the beat of a powerful motor-car on low gear. In the car was a German officer and a woman. As I stepped into the ditch to give it room the headlights showed that there was a body lying close beside me. I came to it warily and struck a match and shaded the flame to look. It was the body of a woman. I drew back, thinking it must be some quick disease such as the plague, and then I saw that in her arms was a child with its head beaten in, and that the woman had been dragged some yards along the road. Up all that steep road there were bodies of men, women and children in the ditches, some had just fallen, worn out, and some had been killed.

We crossed the mountains and came down to a field set with mulberry groves, where we slept, and when I woke I heard the sound of women and children, and in the next field were a crowd of Armenians and with them white-bearded priests. I saw them marched away over the country under the escort of armed gendarmes. They were being marched slowly to death, and the bodies I had seen by the roadside in the Amanus

Mountains were those of them who could not keep up.

The train carried us to Tarsus, and far out we could see the sea and on the horizon smoke that they told us was that of a British battleship. We were raced over the Taurus Mountains by Germans in motor-lorries and entrained at Bozanti. We travelled by train across Anatolia to the junction of Eski-Shehir. Packed tight into carriages we were unable to sleep. Never before had I realized that the lack of sleep could hurt as vividly as a blow. We came at last to the town of Angora, far back in the Anatolian plateau, and from there, with our belongings in country carts, we marched through the wild mountains of the country, through pine forests and through little villages in long green valleys set between bare hills, and so by this steep mountain road we came at last to Kustamouni, which lies close beside the Black Sea.

## CHAPTER IV

### Captivity

**K**USTAMOUNI was a typical town such as may be seen all over Anatolia. Our road ran between scattered broken-down houses and little gardens buttressed up with loose stone walls, up a narrow valley beside a shallow rapid stream. On each side of us were steep hills of rock, scarred and twisted and barren. At the head of the valley on a steep cliff frowned a stone castle, and round it was grouped, as if for safety, the main portion of the town. Below the castle I looked back, and beyond the narrow valley I could see that the country widened to a broad plain full of corn and grass. Round the plain were steep hills that rose into mountains and stretched peak after peak far away into the distance. Wherever I went in Anatolia I saw that view in replica.

We were lodged near by the castle in a large Greek school. The floors were of well-planed wood on which we should have walked in stockinged feet, and our heavy boots soon tore them into splinters.

Utterly tired as we were, it came as a relief, as a sigh of pleasure, to sit down on a chair in a room that shut out the open insistent world. It was strange and pleasant

to put one's knees under a table and eat with knife and fork.

But I had long dreaded the moment that we should stop travelling, for I had realized the strain and reaction of inactivity. I was fit and hard, and as the days passed, my body clamoured for the physical activity to which it had become accustomed. We were not allowed out. It became terrible to be shut away from the sun and the air and the open night sky full of stars. My body, as it were, crept with energy revolting against restraint and confinement. I paced up and down like a wild animal unable to keep still.

Gradually we settled down into the monotony of a prisoner's life in which the day's work is the getting through it. Our guards were quaint old reservists, dressed in shabby blue uniforms that had shrunk ridiculously up their arms and legs. They wore for their equipment a belt with a *cartouche* box and carried old rifles that were more noisy than dangerous. These were given to them on the policy that they were sufficient to sound the alarm but useless to us, if we made a dash for liberty.

The guards were terribly afraid of us when we first arrived. We were, I think, to them something strange, half wild animals and half superior beings which might do something unusual, but which they had at all costs to keep safe. They could never have prevented our breaking out, but their guns would have alarmed the countryside which was full of soldiers, armed police and gendarmes. The sergeant in charge was a little fellow of fifty, whom we nicknamed "Puck." On the

first day I looked out of a window from the third story of the house. All round were steep cliffs. Puck caught sight of me. With a wild grimace he blew his whistle, summoned his men to his aid and levelled his rifle prepared to fire. For some minutes they watched me suspiciously, and then, satisfied that I could not fly, they went back to the guard-room to smoke.

Here, as always during these years of captivity, we held a moral superiority over the Turk. He was always trying to win our approval, always explaining his actions to us, and he showed us a deference, mixed with ill-treatment, that made a curious blend. He would try to treat us up to our standards of living, and then he would grow tired of it and let things conform to the poor conditions of his own country.

I became terribly ill with an internal trouble and, as dengue fever which knotted all my joints came too, the doctors decided to send me for exchange. On a November morning I was hoisted into a country cart and, with an escort and accompanied by a Turkish officer of the old-fashioned type, a certain Sherif Bey, I set out for Constantinople. We followed the same road as that by which we had marched up. We trekked across the mountain plateau and over high passes from where we looked down over miles of forests of pines that sighed together like a great sea.

The movement and the air revived me and I began rapidly to grow well. Seeing the hopes of exchange disappearing, I strove to remain sick. It was bitterly cold. The wind blew from the north straight off the Black Sea and the frozen Crimea. We came one early

morning to the head of a pass. A fog covered everything, and so intense was the cold that the fog froze on the trees, and even under my blankets in my cart I was chilled. The cart stopped and I looked out to see what was the matter. On the road were a number of dogs and donkeys and, among them, unconcerned, without any other covering but their ordinary clothes, lay asleep their Turkish drivers. Shouted at, they woke up, shook themselves, and urged their animals to get up and clear the road. They saluted my Turkish officer respectfully as we passed. I was amazed at the hardihood of the Turkish peasants. At Bagdad and on the march up I had seen our guards lie down on stone floors, not troubling to loosen their coats or shift their bandoliers of ammunition, and there with a butt of a rifle or an arm as a pillow, they slept as if in a feather bed.

The guards, the cart drivers, a number of travellers who had joined us for fear of the brigands that filled the mountains, Sherif Bey and I lived all close together. At night we stopped at some house and in the wide hearth piled up wood and dried dung and made a great blaze, and drank tea and ate what the householder gave us free of charge. There is a curious state of democracy among the Turks. They respect the man not at all, but they respect his office. The head-man of the village, elected yearly by the males, had appointed our lodging, and he would come to feed with us. One by one all the men of the village would come, slipping off their shoes at the door and making the triple salaam as they advanced across the room. They behaved with dignity and with none of that nervous arrogance

of our Northern democrats, who distrust their ability to hold their own and are for ever expecting to be lightly treated. These Turks would wait till asked to sit down, and then they would talk openly and freely, criticizing the greatest to their faces in courteous but forceful terms. Using the correct titles of "Pasha" or "Bey" or "Effendi" for each, they spoke none the less as man to man and as equals, except that they respected the old, and when a man might speak quoting the authority of his office they paid him due deference.

Here, away in Anatolia, far from the railway and the sea, I was getting a last glimpse of the Ottoman Turk as he had been and as he had come down from the days of his greatness. The great Turkish Empire of the sixteenth century had sagged to its fall and been buttressed here and there. It had been saved sometimes by the ability of a Grand Vizier, sometimes by sudden bursts of vitality and the quarrels of its neighbours. Now it was disappearing by reason of decay. The villages through which we passed were empty of young men, and where there were Christians they were disloyal and, if the chance occurred, whispered treason to me. There was a sense of deadness. They were simple, sturdy folk, these Turkish peasants. They made no pretence of wishing to fight in this war. I saw none of the wild enthusiasm of other countries, except among the recruits we met singing along the roads, but they were young and excited. For the rest, the country and the people were tired of the everlasting wars, and ever and again they cursed Enver Pasha and his German crew.



TURKISH VILLAGE HODJAS AND COAST-GUARD OFFICIAL



They were a kindly, hospitable people, slowly roused and then capable of terrible anger and tremendous energy. They were the last of the aristocrats, with their vices and their virtues. They ruled as by Divine Right, as part of a caste, and without political theories. They were not vicious or cruel, but they did not understand pain in others. They had a profound contempt for the rest of mankind, and inherent laziness covered by great courtesy. Inefficient to distraction, they were eminently lovable. Their sense of humour was simple. Sleeping round the hot embers of the fire I was night after night awaked by the hideous snores of a carter, who had a face like a frog and slept with his mouth wide open. At last in desperation I begged some one to wake up *Balik Pasha*, or the "*Fish*" *Pasha*, and shut his fly-trap of a mouth. The name stuck. For a week the word "*Balik*" roused a roar of laughter. Some one on the march would call for "*Balik Pasha* with the fly-trap mouth," and from end to end of the caravan, drivers and guards and passengers in the carts would shout with laughter and call one to another. People used to wake the little fellow at all times to tell him his nickname and then roar with applause, in which he would join. They would, as is their custom, get up at one or two in the morning, kick the fire into life and light cigarettes, and then one would call "*Balik Pasha*" and the whole room would rock with laughter till they lay down to sleep again. Long afterwards a general came to inspect the troops in the area. He heard men talk of "*Balik Pasha*," and incautiously asked who he was. So they brought the little carter before the general,

and a whole countryside laughed and the story became a legend.

At last we came again to Angora, which had become terrible, for half the town was newly burnt and the refugees camped where they could. The market-place was full of triangles on which hung the bodies of many brigands and deserters; for all the country was disorganized and discontented, and robbers had made every road unsafe.

We travelled by the same railway route as that up which I had come. But this time there was ample room, for Sherif Bey requisitioned a *coupé* for me, and this he filled up with flour. This he sold at a good profit in Constantinople; for the Grand Vizier had made a corner in wheat and so the people paid a big price for their flour. Sherif Bey was a genial good soul, and at every station acquaintances came into the train to see him and squatted down cross-legged on the floor and drank black coffee. After gongs had been sounded and whistles blown and a polite guard had asked the gentlemen to get off, they left, still calling good-bye, and then came back again with some last message, and so we dawdled in this kindly, lazy fashion across Anatolia. There was little organization, and none of the drive and concentration that the war had produced in other countries. On the train was a newspaper editor who was a Member of Parliament. He talked in French, and in his frock-coat and striped Bond Street trousers and patent leather shoes squatted with his knees under him. He told me that Turkey was fighting for liberty from foreign interference, and he pictured

the new empire that would grow from victory. He spoke in a Western language of Western ideas, but he was Eastern in mentality and habits.

We came out of the Anatolian plateau down on to the shores of the Sea of Marmora, running through the rich little villages that are grouped on its northern shore, till we saw before us St. Sophia and the Great Seraglio and Stambul slumbering in the late autumn sun.

I was taken to the great hospital of Skutari that faces Stambul across the mouth of the Bosphorus. In my ward were a dozen Turkish officers suffering from foul and loathsome diseases, and a Russian Tartar officer, a wild, mad fellow with a good heart. Close by were a number of British soldiers with amputated arms and legs waiting to be exchanged. They were the victims of a reprisal. The Ottoman Government had heard of some arrangement for the Turkish prisoners in Egypt of which they did not approve. To square matters they ordered these poor wounded prisoners to be put into an Armenian church, their bandages removed and to be left to fend for themselves. There was an Australian who had been wounded in the ankle. In the church the wound gangrened and his leg had to be amputated just below the hip. Now they were full of good cheer and had asserted their independence and bullied the hospital staff. But the arrangements for the exchange fell through, and we prepared to be sent to a prison camp.

It was a terrible place, that hospital. As two German sisters supervised an army of cleaners who were

always at work, it was clean, but the corridors were full of dead and dying. Doctors visited and wrote prescriptions and ordered diets, but there were no medicines to be issued, and as to diet, what the patient could afford and what the hospital orderly could buy decided that. The sick who were brought in from the various fronts were starved, and all organization seemed to have broken down. Pneumonia and dysentery found easy prey in their starved bodies, and they died in hundreds. The corridors as well as the wards were crowded. The dirty attendants, in filthy uniforms and with slip-on shoes or just socks full of holes, took little notice of the patients. I saw men die with a rattle while the attendants finished a game of cards close by. Their main duties were to carry away the dead. The rows of unattended, unwatched, pallid dying were unspeakably terrible ; and yet in all this hospital I heard no one complain.

Against us, their enemies, I found no animosities. Even the German nurses, though full of fierce patriotism, did all they could for us. The Turkish officers were courteous and polite. They showed no enthusiasm for the war. They avoided all controversial subjects. When we happened to talk of the war, they told me glowing accounts of the success of the British troops. It was a curious trait of the Turks to over-represent the success of the enemy. Thus, when we had captured Bagdad they assured me that we were in Mosul.

Only once did we seriously disagree. As is their custom, they used to wake at two in the morning, turn on the electric light and smoke, talk, and even sing. The

Tartar officer and I found this a very wearisome practice. So when the first light showed before dawn and the cocks began to crow we took station at opposite corners of the room and solemnly called the Call to Prayer, imitating all the trills and affectations of the professional Muezzin. And while I called that "God is great" the Tartar, who was a Moslem, kept up a running comment of:

"Get up, you lazy beasts. A *Giaour*, an unbeliever, calls you to prayer. Are you not ashamed to lie abed?"

At first there were faint querulous complaints from the other beds, and then stronger, till the room was full of protests, and one Turk cried out and asked what was the matter, and the Tartar replied:

"If you can wake and sing and smoke when the night is black, it is a small thing for you to wake and pray in the rose of dawn," and I bellowed the special call for the morning:

"Prayer is better than sleep."

Henceforth we slept in peace, and when they smoked in the night the Turks held the cigarettes shielded under the palm of the hand.

Below my window was the cemetery in which lie buried the British who died during the Crimean War. They had died to keep the Russian out of Constantinople, and less than 60 years later we had promised the city to Russia as the reward of victory. From below the cemetery came up the sounds of the whistles and snorts of the trains in Haidar Pasha station, which is the Turkish junction on the Berlin to Bagdad railway. Much of the

world's history had been connected with that route. Cyrus of Persia and Alexander of Macedon and half the world's conquerors have marched along it. In the hands of a Great Power it always has been, and it is to-day, the key to the Middle East, threatening Egypt, Arabia, Irak, and even the Indies. The Germans had got that control and the power to use it, and this was one of the potent factors that led to the Entente and the World War.

To the right of the hospital was a courtyard, and there the recruits awaiting medical inspection and the men discharged from hospital assembled each day. A sergeant dealt out a loaf of bread all round and grouped the men into parties of eight. From each group he selected a man, issued a tin bowl to him, fell them in and marched them off. They came back singly with the bowl full of soup. As soon as they arrived at their own group each man produced a wooden spoon, sat down on his heels and all set to work to ladle up as much as they could. On this ration twice a day in prosperous times, and some two shillings a month in pay, the Turkish soldier marched and fought, wearing the same clothes summer and winter without change till they fell to pieces; and he complained but little.

Sometimes a recruit failed to get his share of the soup. I watched him with uplifted spoon protest to the sergeant, who was a little squat fellow with a square face like a disgruntled bull-dog. He and the recruit would advance on each other with arms uplifted, calling on Allah in many wonderful ways. Face to face they would exhibit such a wealth of gesture and language that it seemed to

me inevitable that a fierce fight must result. Suddenly the recruit would shrug his shoulders in despair and turn away and the little man would stump off on his bow legs. At fifty yards, as at a given signal, they would turn round and come tearing down on each other gesticulating and calling aloud, and would then repeat the same scene. Even a third and fourth repetition of this would occur, and then the sergeant would stump off for good, and the recruit with a shrug, and often with a grin, would squat down with his friends and roll a cigarette. Quarrels in this strange country seemed to have a recognized formality.

In the bed on my right was a young Turkish officer, a nephew of Enver Pasha, the Minister of War and to all intents and purposes the dictator of Turkey. Enver visited his nephew and then turned to me. He was a small, clean-cut, handsome little man with more self-assurance than ability, but with unlimited courage. He had that element of drive and energy that the Turk as a rule lacks. He had moreover the power of persistent effort which is the rarest quality in the East. He appeared to be a dangerous man in a corner, and one who would take great risks because he believed that his luck would pull him through. He inquired as to my health, and politely regretted that the exchange of prisoners had failed. He hoped that I was comfortable, and told me that the Turkish nation would treat me as its honoured guest. That phrase of "honoured guest" angered me. It had been said to us by high dignitaries at Mosul and Bagdad and Aleppo and in Kustamouni. Suddenly I realized that it was owing to this man's orders that the

desert road was littered with the corpses of good British soldiers and that a score lay mutilated in the next ward. Seeing him only through the red haze of anger, I summoned all my scanty Turkish to my assistance and bade him get away and go to the devil. He was unmoved, but in French he politely regretted my lack of courtesy and gave orders that I should be removed forthwith to the prison at the Ministry of War.

## CHAPTER V

### The Stambul Prison

A MILITARY policeman, with a collar round his neck like a dog's with a tablet to show who he was, came to fetch me. The Turkish officers assured me that I was to be lodged in one of the grand hotels of Pera, but now I had learnt the etiquette of the country and so I invited them all to dine with me at the "Grand Hotel."

With my policeman I crossed over by boat from the Asiatic side to Stambul. A street arab found us a crazy cab, which took us up narrow steep twisting streets of cobbles, so crowded that the driver cracked his whip and called continuously to obtain room to pass. In the half evening light these jumbled streets with their nondescript crowds seemed fantastic and unreal.

We drove up to a tall gateway where a sentry halted us and we got out and walked. It was the great square of the War Office. Above us the tower of Stambul, from where the watchman calls the alarm for fires, stood clear up into the night sky. The moon was sinking cool and wonderful and the stars twinkled merrily. Below us was Stambul, alive with lamps, and the Golden Horn torn into long streaks of light as motor-boats raced across

it. The roar of the great city came up to us. The evening air tasted good and sweet. We came to a long, low red building, and a sentry opened double iron doors and called a sergeant, who took us in. As the doors crashed to behind me, my soul revolted. From below us came up the foul stench of unclean men and unclean rooms. I was still weak and shaky after my illness, and the reek made my gorge rise.

In a small office the governor of the prison, Jemal Bey, received me. He was a small man, slim, smart and neat, with a cruel face and steel-blue eyes that, like a snake's, never winked. He was Enver's jackal. This prison was the scene of many tragedies, and many unwanted persons had died in it of typhus or some other convenient disease. It was Jemal who had to do this dirty work.

He led me down an iron staircase, along dark passages where on each side were cellar-like rooms crowded with three-tier beds and prisoners by the hundred, till we came to a wooden door. This he opened and indicated that I was to enter. I drew back, for it was dark, and he gave some order to the sentry, who pushed me roughly in and closed the door, and I heard Jemal's spurs go clanking down the stone passage as he walked away.

Suddenly an electric light was turned on, and I saw that I was in a narrow and short but lofty little room and that the electric light was far up in the ceiling. It was so narrow a room that it was only just large enough to hold two beds end to end. It appeared to be half underground and a grating high in one wall gave air. There was a touch of humour in it—this mediæval dungeon fitted with one crown of modern civilization, electricity as light.

It came to me that it was typical of all I had seen in this country, this insertion of the wonders of progressive Europe into the primitive unchanged base of Asia.

On the farther bed sat a man who swayed and ran a string of beads through his fingers and said his prayers softly, looking always fixedly up at the little grating. After a while he turned round, bade me welcome, and we fell into conversation as far as my broken Turkish allowed. It transpired that he was here for the murder of his wife, and for many a long day we discussed the ethics of wife-murder. He taught me much—of the way to bribe the soldier with the smallest amount necessary to get food and permission to carry out the ordinary decencies of life, and he gave me an insight into the mind of a fatalist that sees no use in effort. He had no regrets, because it was inevitable that he should have murdered the woman, as it was inevitable, and already written whether or no he should be hung. He amused himself by laboriously cleaning each day a celluloid collar and then wrapping it up in paper and hanging it on a nail. He made life uncomfortable in some ways, for I had to sleep on my boots and money and anything else thievable, but when they came one night and dragged him away I missed him sadly.

I had lost count of days, though I could not have been long in this cell. I had little to do except to listen to the tread of the sentry, or the clank of a chained prisoner as he swept out the corridor. On the bed there was a straw mattress alive with great big bugs that swarmed in hundreds, and with them came fleas. In desperation I caught them and quickly filled a match-

box of the dead and alive. I made a neat parcel of the box and gave it to the sentry, telling him that it was very valuable and to be delivered straight to Enver Pasha. Whether it reached its destination I cannot say, but next day a band of convicts under a warder cleaned out my loathsome cell. Life was as mean and unliveable as it well could be. I sat in the cold, sometimes in the dark, sometimes with the electric light, with nothing to do and only as much food as I could bribe the good-natured but equally hungry sentry to bring, without change of clothes or wash or shave, except an occasional splash in cold water, and with my clothes alive with vermin.

With a pencil and paper I slowly scratched in Turkish a letter of protest to the Governor of Stambul. It produced a sudden and quite unexpected reply. I was summoned to his office, and under escort I came out blinking into the sun, across the Great Square and so up the marble steps by the gateway and into the Governor's house. I found myself in a large room fitted with uncomfortable Victorian furniture. Facing me behind a large writing-table was a handsome man with a big body and a strong face. He held my letter in his hand. "What do you mean," he began in French, "by writing to me in this insolent way?"

"What," I replied, "do you mean by shutting me, a British officer and a prisoner-of-war, into a filthy condemned cell without light or exercise?"

The man was a bully. His manner changed at once. "Perhaps my French is not good," he said, and called to a woman who sat veiled on a sofa. He bade the guard

call Jemal Bey from the prison and to wait outside. The woman stepped forward and lifted her veil. I was astounded. This was the first time that I had seen a Turkish woman of the aristocratic class. Her eyes were black and set in a face as white and clear as pure marble so that the veins showed blue through the skin. Her hair was hidden in a dainty little cloak that was drawn over it and was tied under it behind, coming down round the shoulders as far as the hands. Two curls alone showed over the ears. She wore high-heeled French shoes and silk stockings and a shortish skirt that was pleated to the waist. She spoke perfect English in a soft modulated voice and translated into smooth Turkish so that it was like the running of water over a hollow rock into a hidden pool. She was scented and exquisitely dainty.

The lady dropped her veil as Jemal entered. He was bullied and cursed by the Governor and eventually he was beaten across the face and ordered away. I am sure that he had only carried out his orders, but the Governor hated the Germans and Enver, and what Enver had ordered would be to him automatically wrong.

I returned to a new room in the prison, light and airy, and looking out over the city. At times I was allowed into a garden with an escort. Below me was a sheer wall some eighty feet high, and below that the city of Stambul ran down straight to the Golden Horn that was for ever alive with boats. Beyond was Pera, and far away to the right Skutari and the blue Sea of Marmora and the mountains of Anatolia. Beside me was the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, with its great

massive domes and its delicate minarets, from which the Muezzin would call to prayer, and then all the other mosques would take up the call.

As I went from my room to the garden through the corridors I passed many of the huge cells full of prisoners. I could see them playing cards. Men of all ages and of all classes, by the look of it, appeared to be muddled together. They stank as if with pestilence, but it was merely accumulated dirt. They seemed to be a community apart, gambling and drinking tea and dragging their chains about clanking on the floor. They formed a sort of subterranean world living its own life. Somewhere there was a torture-room for I heard regular blows and screams and groans, but my guards denied its existence. All the prison was foul and full of evil smells.

I was treated now with as much leniency as previously I had been treated harshly. I was allowed, with my policeman, to go into the town and buy things. There were troops in the Great Square practising the goose-step, but beyond that and many German officers racing about in powerful cars there was little or no sign of war. This city appeared to be outside it and uninterested. I realized that the soul of the Ottoman Empire had long since fled, but that a few capable vigorous men, such as Enver, kept flogging the body on to fresh efforts.

In the prison I was given more liberty. My door was always open. My guard grew slack. One morning I saw that he was asleep and that his fez had fallen off. In a second I was out. The greasiness of his fez revolted me, but I put it on. In the grey light I picked my way

cautiously through the corridors till I came to the unfinished gate by the garden and there I saw that the sentry had gone to drink tea. Dawn was just coming up over the Marmora. Below in the city blue smoke began to float up in wisps, as the world woke. I could hear the sentry sucking noisily at his tea. I stepped out and round the corner to a point I had noted on the wall, where the ground below ran up steeply and a telegraph pole came within a few feet of the top of the wall.

I looked over. It was sheer down and beyond that the hill fell away almost sheer. Gripping my fear, I lay down on the top of the wall and prepared to roll over and hang by my arms while my feet felt for the strut that held the telegraph pole to the wall. I dared not look down, for I am no great hand at heights. As I hesitated one second before I slipped over I felt my sleeve furtively plucked. By me stood my guard with terror in his eyes. He beckoned me back, indicating that I should keep silent. He replaced his fez on his head and together we returned quietly. As we passed the gate I heard the sentry still sucking at his tea. Hereafter my guards did not sleep on duty and watched me closely.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Prison Camp in Anatolia

ONE day Jemal Bey brought me orders to get ready to go to Afion-Kara-Hissar, a prisoners' camp in Anatolia. With him he brought a policeman and he showed me to the door of the prison. I think he was glad to see the last of me. I was an unknown quantity, and a potential source of trouble. In his cold-blooded steely-eyed way he saluted me as if I was a prince of the blood. The sentry stood to attention and in my dirty old clothes I strode away with my policeman.

We threaded our way down the steep crowded streets, but my policeman gave me no chance to slip away. We had to wait for a boat on Galata Bridge while evening turned to night. The Golden Horn came down to us in a curve. It was packed with Arab-looking craft that lie in here for the night and make a forest of masts. Beyond them the Turkish destroyers stood out grim. A motor-boat or two raced noisily to its moorings. A German submarine slid stealthily under the bridge on the way out to sea. On one side Galata and Pera were grouped, gaunt and sordid towns, ill-civilized and ugly. On the other was Stambul, picturesque and frankly Eastern. A mist crept up and clothed the city in

mystery. The moon warmed from cold cloud white to yellow as it sailed up the sky. It threw the mosques and minarets into dark shadows, and its reflection swayed and shivered on the water as some boat broke the surface into waves. A fish leaped where there was a path of light between the boats. Far away a watchman called and beat on the ground with his pole, and near at hand his mate replied. Two Arabs in a boat below us were cooking in a brazier. The night was full of untrammelled liberty, and when my policeman called me to come I was minded to break away.

We came once more to Haidar Pasha station, and passed the barrier where the police were searching passengers for gold or silver and giving paper in exchange. Before we had travelled an hour the train stopped, and I was invited by a crowd of officers to see the place where a British submarine had shelled a train. She had dived under the mines in the narrow Dardanelles, crossed the inland Sea of Marmora and here in the centre of the enemy's country opened fire. The Turks congratulated me on the courage of the commander. They looked on it as a fine feat and one to be made much of. I could not help thinking that a German or an Englishman would have taken a far different view if it had been in his country.

We travelled back to Eski-Shehir and down the line towards Konia, in the same old haphazard way. It was the main line of communication for the armies fighting in Syria and Mesopotamia. At the various stations Germans endeavoured to hurry things up and instil some energy into the traffic, but they ran straight into a stone wall of indifference, and with this indifference

was mixed a bitter dislike. The Germans treated the Turks with high contempt, and more than one told me how glad he was to meet another white man in this "native" country. They were the motive driving force endeavouring to get the old, patched, broken-down rusty machinery of the Ottoman Empire to work. I was treated with respect. I was confided in by both Germans and Turks as to the failings of the other; and I was an enemy and a prisoner. Everything that went wrong was put down to the Germans. If there was a fire, German soldiers had started it. If food was short, it had been shipped to Berlin to feed Germans. Sometimes this ill-feeling blazed out into a quarrel. I saw a German private get into a carriage with Turkish officers and refuse to get out. As if ready for this, a dozen Turks rushed at him and dragged him out and locked him into a waiting-room.

We came to Afion-Kara-Hissar, that stands high up in the Anatolian plateau, and found it had the same narrow valley, the same castle on a rock and the same broad plain beyond, as there was at Kustamouni; only that here in the plain they grew miles of glowing red poppies instead of corn.

There had been a camp here for a long time, and some 200 officers, British, French and Russian, were imprisoned. Once more I settled down to the dreary monotony of a prisoner's life. Time slipped by unnoticed. There was, between the houses in which we lived, a narrow street to walk in by day. All day and every day there was nothing to do. We made work. We walked in the street. We read aimlessly the books

we got occasionally from home. The future was uncertain. We might be here for years. One pessimist told us that French prisoners had been kept in England from 1792 to 1815. We kept our self-respect only by truculence to our captors. We became detached and, even about the World War, impassive. Our news was from German communiqués, and it all seemed distant and vague. We lived closed together without privacy, without for one minute being able to get away from each other. We lived so close, cheek by jowl, that we did not realize that we grew older. Life stood still. There was no movement nor definite clear-cut action. We were unmoved like rocks on a hillside among other rocks. There seemed to be no past nor any future. Time did not pass. No one grew old or changed, for we grew side by side and being so close we did not see—unless some one blossomed out into grey hair or lapsed into imbecility.

We were a monastic community, without the ideals and enthusiasm of monks, or the rigid discipline and definite future of convicts. Our food was the coarse peasant food of the country and as poor as that of any monastery. No woman came into our lives, but we had no strong vows of celibacy to keep the warmth of youth out of our blood. At the sight, far out beyond the road, of a woman, be she ever so ill-favoured and dirty, a thrill of excitement ran down the street. This absence of a component part of life had its distinct effect, and we became after a while numb and half-senseless. The Russian prisoners had a woman or two hidden among them disguised as men, until they quarrelled over them and the Turks found out. The French officers were

frank. They received from their wives, not photographs or trinkets as mementoes, but pieces of dainty under-clothing which they kept beneath their pillows. The British tried to avoid facts and succeeded to some extent. I realized that a life free from woman would be free from the passionate despondent hours, of the nights of despair, of heart-burnings and remorse, but that it would be stale, flat, and tasteless ; for even in remorse there is a touch of self-satisfied pride.

I could not sit idle. Against the established general opinion of the camp that it was wrong to attempt it, I prepared to escape. At the eleventh hour our plans were given away, and late one night I was called before the commandant of the camp. He was a foul beast, half Arab and half Turk, with the vices of both. He was a short sturdy man with a coarse evil face, named Mazlum Bey. He had committed terrible bestialities, beaten men to death, stolen our food, and done unnameable offences by force on our soldiers imprisoned elsewhere in the town. When angered he became a wild raging madman capable of any atrocity. I lied to him freely and he believed not a word because he had expected such lies and I and my four companions were shut into two rooms and isolated from the rest of the camp until we should give our parole.

For a while resentment kept our spirits up, but as the days grew into weeks and the weeks into months I ceased to notice the exact details of the passage of time. I tried philosophically to let life slip past me, but it travelled on unoiled wheels and with difficulty. Day after day and night after night I sat and watched the

sky from the window. I could see one little patch between the house-tops. Sometimes far up in its blue a kite wheeled and cried, or a swallow raced across it, or a pigeon shot home with a swoop. Sometimes a great free bird would float lazily across it. At night it became alive with stars. I swore that in my life I would never again keep any wild animal in captivity. The sun was but the passing of shadow and light on walls opposite. I never walked in it. By straining hard out against the bars I could see up the road a skimpy bit of tree that showed half its branches to me. It budded and became green. It put out rich leaves. It turned yellow and once more became bare arms swaying in the driving snow. And still the eternal time stood still, just swinging in and out from day into night and back again. I became too tired to sit or lie down, and then too tired to sleep. I thought of great deep gulps of strong air after some hard game; of the smell of free running water in the spring and the light green of young willows on the Cher at Oxford, of the pulse of a horse moving under me, of the kick of life and freedom, and then of long, deep, dreamless sleep held soft and warm in the arms of unconsciousness. This was the Hell of the Living Dead. I fancied that perhaps we were dead and unknowingly we were in Hell. I told Robin Paul, who was in the next room. He pondered awhile. "No," he said, "it cannot be Hell, for I never did anything bad enough for this."

Our persistency, in refusing our parole, had hardened to sullen obstinacy, when suddenly the Turks grew tired and we returned to the camp as before.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Fall of the Ottoman Empire : Release, 1918

**A**S is ever the way with the Turks, they now swung to the other extreme, and our treatment became as liberal as it had before been stringent. I was made staff-officer of the camp. Mazlum Bey was put under arrest with all his officers. To complete the picture, the sergeant of the guard, having no officer to whom to apply, as they were all in prison, and being quite bewildered, came to me for his day's orders. These I gave to him written out laboriously in my crude Turkish. Mazlum was tried for his foulness, and on the court I was the prosecutor and interpreter. Such was the humour of the situation.

We were given more liberty. At times we got opportunities to talk to some of our men imprisoned in another part of the town. We learnt the details of their march up and how all across the Mesopotamian plains and in the unorganized camps both British and Indians had died by the thousand. It appeared that hopeless inefficiency and callousness of human life was the main causes, while deliberate calculated cruelty was rare. The Turks had treated our worn and starved and diseased soldiers

as they treated their own men, and both had died like flies. Now in a sort of death-bed repentance at this eleventh hour the Ottoman Government was treating them with great kindness and giving them much liberty. But of the thousands that set out from Kut only a few hundred remained. These were probably better treated than any prisoners have been treated before, except the Russians in Japan. They ran their own affairs, attempted escapes without punishment, and worked as they willed.

As to the officers, as a whole they were pretty well treated, but the life of a prisoner-of-war must always be a dreary hardship.

The iron chain round us began to relax and, as we gained more liberty, our spirits rose. There were many attempts at escape. We worked night and day in secret preparing and studying any maps we could get, and copying and enlarging passes and plans sent to us from England in split post-cards or cunningly hidden in books. But though it was easy to get out of camp, the country beyond was wild and barren and made a perfect prison wall. It was full of fierce men. It was as if one tried to escape from Kabul through the wild Afghan tribes over the mountains into India.

Everywhere there were signs of the Ottoman Empire breaking up. In the town, into which we were now allowed to go under guard, the people talked with open discontent. The hills were full of deserters and brigands. Food was short and the prices crept up till only the rich could buy sugar and tea and the necessities of life. Our guards had grown slack. I could feel the break

coming. The Germans made great efforts to revive their Turkish allies to further effort. So important to the succes of the Central Powers was the co-operation of Turkey that in 1917 the Kaiser himself paid a state visit to the Sultan in Stambul. But the vitality of the Ottoman Empire was already gone.

Within the camp the ordinary life continued. Some arranged concert parties. Some plotted escapes. Many sat patiently like stalled oxen and waited for the end. Some grew wild, and one party gambled heavily. I saw a player with a bad hand at poker stake his parcels from home and his pay for a month, and so reduced himself to living on bread and water for thirty days.

With care I made my own plans for escape with disloyal Arabs and Greeks, but as ever when the last minute came they failed me. My final plan was ready when orders came to exchange sick prisoners. I had helped to arrange details of the exchange, and was at the railway station when my attention was directed to a waggon in a siding with curtains drawn and a sentry on guard. I was allowed to look in. Inside sat some forty Germans with their faces in bandages. "The Arabs of Feisal," he continued, "did that. They took out their eyes, cut off their ears and cut their tongues and mutilated them." In the half-light the men fumbled aimlessly or sat dead-still as blind men will.

The first exchanges were over. All the sick were gone when more prisoners for exchange were required. I ate cordite, that I had kept hidden, till my heart leapt and sighed, and swallowed hard-boiled eggs till a congested liver turned me yellow. Then with the aid of a



HEADMEN OF OTTOMAN GREEK VILLAGES



little sum of money to the doctor I was passed out and I boarded the train for Smyrna.

I knew little of the war. The battles of the Somme and Verdun and the Hindenburg Line were vague names meaning nothing to me. But I could see that, whatever was happening elsewhere, in Turkey things were breaking up. The unwilling worn-out country had been kept going by the Germans, and I saw these come streaming back up the line from the Eastern fronts.

In Smyrna it was the same story. The Turks spent their time trying to please us. We were allowed to go quite free. The troops stationed above the town were prepared to revolt. If the war went on much longer it appeared that there might be a revolution. The Germans were withdrawing, and with them went the energy and the driving force. The old cranky patched machinery of the Ottoman Empire came crashing down with a run.

While we waited in Smyrna, Bulgaria asked for an armistice. We put ourselves—for all else was disorganized—into the ship that waited for us in the roadstead. At last we were out, running in the darkness past Khios, zigzagging for fear of enemy submarines, but free and riding for Egypt.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The First Days of the Armistice

**A**T length in fine weather we came to Alexandria, and after many vexatious delays we got ashore. There were no preparations to receive us, but imprisonment had taught us to fend for ourselves, and we soon found lodgings and clothes. I had always laughed at and often sneered at the Turks for their inefficiency, and pictured the methodical regulated running of any British organization. I had a rude awakening, for in Egypt I found the same lack of foresight, the same procrastination, the same galling inefficiency and the same indifference. We were still in the East.

I spent my short time there during the day in reading up dispatches and reports in the staff offices, and in hoping to get on to the French front. I quickly saw that the system of government in Egypt, as set up by Milner, was gone. In the old days British officials had stood secreted behind the Egyptian ministers, guiding and advising them. Under the stress of war they had pushed the Egyptians on one side and frankly taken control.

With me I had brought a Turkish officer, who had been involved in some of our schemes in Smyrna. At

night we put on fezes and wandered as Turkish officers through the alleys and bazaars of Alexandria. In khaki by day I could find no one who would speak Turkish, but at night it was the language of half the population. They crowded round us in cafés, eager to talk and to get news. They showed their bitter hatred of the British and bemoaned the lax Turkish government of the old days.

But we were eager to be off. We took ship and came to the British camp in Taranto. The East dogged our steps. The camp was foul and ill run. As we travelled through Italy I could not but see the disorder and disorganization.

"Where have we got to?" said one, "for 'East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.'" "We shall leave the East at the Alps," replied his companion.

As we came to the Simplon Tunnel, we heard that the Germans had signed the Armistice; and so we travelled steadily across torn France, and, while they still celebrated the end of the war, we came eager and panting with excitement into Dover Harbour.

I found myself in a strange land, not to be confused with the England that I had left in 1913. It had grappled blindly in the horror of an immense nightmare, and now it had awaked in the clear splendid dawn. I was a stranger, a sort of Rip Van Winkle. I knew nothing of the stress and strain. I did not know the names of the great battles in France, nor the catchwords of the troops. I had never heard of the V.A.D., nor of the Land Girl. I belonged to another age. I found

England hard and primitive, full of great enthusiasm, of great passions, of great hatreds, and of great ideals. I raced to catch up. I devoured books of war photographs and read the old newspapers. Only vaguely as a distant view I saw now and again the stark terror of the years that I had missed, and the tremendous blind forces that had been tearing at each other; but I felt the great sob of relief of the millions who came back to light and life and the great fun that was to fill the world.

In the middle of December I was employed in the War Office. This allowed me to extend my horizon from the view-point of personal experience, and with the eyes of a hundred observers to see the situation as a whole. I found that England had taken within her protecting arms vast tracts of new territory—Mesopotamia, Palestine, the Caucasus and parts of Turkey, and I found a belief that she could cleanse these countries and put them on the high road to salvation. There was a splendid hope in a new era that was dawning.

The war machine was still running full, but hardly had I felt the thrill and the drive of the immense impulse than reaction came dragging back. The people of England clamoured to get back to their homes and their dancing and their money-making. With the war won, they naturally concluded that their task was finished. But it was as if a surgeon in a delicate major operation had suddenly gone off to his tea and allowed his patient to bleed to death.

Great empires had been torn into glutinous strips, or smashed into brittle or highly explosive pieces. The

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world lay full of fragments waiting to be tied up by the Allies into neat little parcels and correctly labelled, but the people of England wanted peace and quiet, retrenchment and demobilization. It was the most outstanding feature of the moment, and it was the most important factor in the history of the years of the Armistice. Diplomacy and foreign policy needed a great army. The settlement of the world required a strong police. The people of England were not prepared for this further sacrifice. America frankly withdrew her diplomats with her armies. We withdrew our armies, but we sent our diplomats to do great things, and they failed and were shamed.

The War Office was weighed down with masses of new problems. The ordinary officials there, conscientious but far from brilliant, were called upon to gather correct material and advise and decide on problems of vast importance, and at the same time to assist in administering half a world in turmoil. They were surrounded by experts and interested persons full of novel facts. They were supplied with maps that were rank with errors. A new propaganda grew up with maps as the posters and advertisements. These were neatly printed. They looked as authentic as a Bartholomew road map. They were often a deliberate perversion of facts to assist a poor argument. Every move was hampered by numbers of treaties made under the stress of war. These were often contradictory and now regretted.

In Paris the Conference had started, with no one quite knowing what it meant, and all the people of the world

were talking at once. As time passed, in every direction and in unexpected places, vast blind forces released by the war became apparent and menacing. To meet them there was little to offer. The armies were contracting with demobilization. The energy and idealism was dying away and left only a tired people.

Nowhere had the victory been so crushing as in Turkey. She lay battered down, ruined and broken. Any terms of peace could have been imposed without resistance. Far away in Anatolia the ninth Caucasus army alone remained undefeated, but it was submissive and overawed. There were Allied garrisons all across Turkey. She lay inert, patiently waiting her fate. I found the English people against the Turks. Here and there a few experts and a few cranks spoke on their behalf, but the mass of the people was hostile. The churches remembered the massacres of Christians. The Free Churches were clamouring for the return of Constantinople and St. Sophia and the ejection of the Turk from Europe. The war hatred was strong in those untouched by religion. It was agreed that an end was to be made of Turkey, and Mr. Lloyd George was the spokesman of that idea.†

But in all matters the decision rested with the Conference in Paris, and there so vast and complex and innumerable were the problems to be settled that Turkey was neglected for the time being. It was felt that she was but the rubbish and bits of the Ottoman Empire that had finally collapsed, and that a sweeping up of those could wait until more urgent problems nearer home were settled. In that delay lay danger, and

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one by one many of the troubles settled themselves.

The first blow came when the Italians on the 29th of March 1919 landed in south-eastern Anatolia, and, despite the protests of the other Allies, began rapidly to take over the country. They had a definite clear-cut policy. They intended to replace Austria in the Near East. They took over the Austrian banks and the Austrian ships. They had been promised the port of Smyrna at the Conference of St. Jean de Maurienne in 1915 and they set out to get it. They were for annexation. Each year, some hundreds of thousands of emigrants leave Italy for other countries. The soil and climate of Anatolia are excellent, and the Italian Government hoped to raise there a stout peasant population and make Italy a world power and an empire.

Already there was friction between France and England, for the former thought that she was being kept out of Cilicia, despite all promises and the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement, and that steps were being taken to oust her from Constantinople.

It was still possible by immediate action to settle the Near East, but the situation, if delayed, was potentially dangerous.

## CHAPTER IX

### Central Europe, Italy, Athens, and Salonika in 1919

**I** SET out once more for Constantinople in the first days of April, 1919. Slowly and only with much labour I travelled across Central Europe. I left an England still wild with excitement and dancing and the pleasures of life. The men had come home from the army with their pockets full of money and no cares for the future. But in Europe all system and organization had broken down. Everywhere there was confusion and with it famine and despair. Starvation and Bolshevism were twin brothers and together they raced a neck-and-neck race with the harvest that was just coming green in the fields. In Switzerland the valleys were full of the sound of the newly released streams that sang of spring and of food to come.

As we came out of the Alps on to the plains beyond we met the spring as she came singing and dancing out of the dusty East. But it was only the promise of plenty, and, if civilization was to be saved, there was need at once of food and comfort. In Italy itself, one of the victors, there were profound political upheavals and strikes and discord.

We ran through vineyards and cornfields and red-roofed villages and then down the coast of the Adriatic with its rocks, and figs and ancient twisted olive trees and white square flat-roofed Oriental villages set in the background of the blue sea. Here and there I saw a red flag, and in many railway-stations pictures of Lenin. Revolution stood ready at the gate, prepared to burst in and sweep the plains and the hills bare and leave the villages desolate. Civilization, weak and pallid, faced red Anarchy.

We came to Taranto and from there took ship, rounded the heel of Italy, crossed the Adriatic, ran in behind the long island of Corfu, and, as the dawn showed grey over the mainland, we anchored below the two grey forts that watch over the town of Corfu.

We threaded our way out and down into the Ionian Islands, through the narrow strait that divides Ithaca from Cephalonia, and, leaving Messolonghi and its marshes away on our left, swung eastwards into the gulf of Corinth and stayed a while in Patras.

Then we sailed down the gulf with the towering barren mountains of Old Greece on our left and the rich green garden-covered shore of the Morea on our right.

In these seas each hour of the day and night is full of wonder. I watched the splendour of the dawn from Corfu, as the town turned from silver to gold under the fingers of the newly risen sun. I lazed through the sunny days, while from the south blew up a soft wind from Africa that carried with it forgetfulness of care. We passed places renowned for great poets or

for great deeds done there, and my lazy brain caught once more the half-forgotten thrill and inspiration of the ancient classics.

I watched the sun set in a clear sky, a blaze of fierce colours quenched suddenly to soft tints, and then the purple night sweep up moonless and profound set deep with a myriad stars; while the islands became dim shapes veiled behind darkness.

Sea and sky and land were rich with colours and beauties so exquisite that even the honeyed full-mouthed phrases of Homer seemed inadequate. They left the aching indefinable sadness that is an integral part of all great beauty.

The ship passed the narrow Canal of Corinth, skirted the barren coast of Attica, rounded the island of Salamis, and so came into the hot bleak port of Piræus. From there I took a car and set out for Athens.

For so great a setting modern Athens is a little mean town. Above it, almost, as it were, isolated, stood the Acropolis in its unrivalled beauty. At that moment the town was alive and throbbing with vitality, energy and the enthusiasm of the victory. Greece was straining upwards to become great. But the more I saw, the less I believed in her greatness. She was living on the froth of excitement that is all bubbles that burst easily. The ability to organize and the instinct to rule were not there. Words were more plentiful than efficiency. I saw that despite the show of vitality the Greeks were little better than the Turks. I had visited the Greek prisons and found them as foul as those of Stambul. That at Patras was full of political prisoners

who lived in stone vaults underground crowded together in foulness and indecency. The prisoners never saw the sun. Their food was handed through the bars of a grating up to which they had to climb from the dark vaults underground.

I came to Salonika by ship and waited for transport, for all the railways in the Balkans were impassable. The town was full of troops, and in the Turkish quarter the Greek cavalry were stabled in the mosques. Round the town were many concentration camps of wretched depressed Bulgarian prisoners. The once flourishing port was ruined. The Turks who had stayed were as cowed and terrified as the Armenians that I had seen in Anatolia under the Turkish rule. These peoples, whether they be Turk or Christian, appear to have no instinct for ruling.

Above the town on the hill was the massive old stone fort of Yedi-Kule, now turned into a prison. Inside it, in the court-yard, were broken shanties of wood and round them narrow pens with mud floors. They were crowded with prisoners. I was up on the battlements with the sentries in the warm sunlight. Below the fort lay red-roofed villas set in gardens and trees from whence came up the scent of flowers and the sound of the sea breeze playing in the tree tops. Beyond, placid and blue, lay the harbour and a lazy steamer drawing out to the open sea. Away in the distance great mountains towered into light shifting clouds that broke now and again and showed the snow glittering on their peaks.

I looked down into the fort. It was dark and cold. I could feel the dreary monotony and the barrenness.

There were six hundred men crowded together and shut into slavery for political reasons. Some wandered up and down the few paces of the pens. I heard a sentry hit one dully because he came too close to the barrier. Some lay within the huts. Many were catching lice. The stench of uncleanness, as of the dead, came up to me in a heavy sickening vapour. A great bird sailed lazily across the sky. I was back in Afion-Kara-Hissar and in revolt—revolt against the folly of war and the stupidity of politics and the shutting up of men like savage beasts of prey. With an effort I realized that the sky was wide and open, and that I was free and no prisoner.

I was glad to leave Salonika. It had become a backwater. The armies were gone to Constantinople and those who were left were cleaning up to move. I went aboard with no regret, but there remained with me a fetid remembrance of the prisoners on the hill, and the ill-kept Bulgars in the camps.

## CHAPTER X

### In Constantinople as one of the Victors

THE steward called me late and the dawn was already coming up grey before I was on deck to watch the ship plough her way up the Dardanelles. The rocky shores stood out ragged and raw, uninviting, quite unfriendly and menacing. The last day's heat lay heavy in the stony valleys, and there came down the stale smell that spoke of dust and flies. A hawk wheeled out as he hunted early. A wedge of duck fledged past. Here and there were tired villages, just waking to the day.

We swung into the Sea of Marmora as the sun rose on our right. Before us in the spring morning the sea lay still in exquisite blue. As the dawn broke it left the Islands of the Princes pearl-grey in the shadow of night and tipped their peaks with gold. Behind us in great patches of sun and deep shadow, their feet draped in a gentle mist, the Anatolian hills climbed steep up into the mountains of Asia till they reached the everlasting snows of Olympus, towering sheer into the sky. Before us, glittering in the dawn, lay Constantinople, and Stambul the Turkish city, called in Arabic "The Gate of Delight." It was a mass of minarets and mosques, red-

roofed houses set in trees, reaching down to the point where the old Seraglio and the Imperial Harems frown over the sea. Away beyond, divided by the Golden Horn and spanned by the Bosphorus, stood Pera, once the old *ghetto*, where now gaunt brick houses crowded on the sides of many hills, full of Europeans and rich people.

We anchored off Leander's tower where the Bosphorus runs into the sea, and its fierce current twists and swirls, mouths at the ships and snarls as it dives down a hundred feet below sea surface. The waterways were crowded with shipping and with myriads of small craft that kept no rules of the road. While we waited I remembered my last visit here in the hour of defeat, with my policeman and in my ragged old uniform. Now I came back on the tide of a stupendous victory and full of hope of the great future. The Allied passport officers came aboard. The Frenchman was fussy and a nuisance, because he could not help it. The Italian nosed round on the chance of seeing a good-looking woman, because he could not help it. The Englishman was frankly bored. Outside England I have often wondered as to the value of the Passport System. The efficient criminal and the dangerous politician can easily circumvent it. I suppose it holds up the feeble-minded and the silly ass, and that is a blessing.

We landed at the Bridge and plunged into Galata and into the rattle and roar that is the sound of Constantinople. Instinctively I held my breath, waiting for the crash. Trams banged and squealed, as they passed over worn-out points. Motor-cars of all makes

dashed about taking risks. Horse-carts without springs or tyres rattled over the cobbled streets. Oxen swayed along to the shouts and prods of their drivers. The pavements and the road were thronged with people who respected no rule of the road. There were ranges of flabby white faces without distinction or character. Here and there I saw a pretty girl, a woman over-painted, or a man gesticulating over-violently. They were all over-smoked, slept-in-stale-air, weak, sickly faces. The people were of every type and gabbled in every tongue. There were long-bearded Armenian priests with rusty gowns and chimney-pot hats, and Greek priests in top-hats with the brims knocked off and dirty shabby boots sticking out from under dingy gowns. There were *hodjas* in turbans, Turks and French colonial troops in fezes. There were slit-eyed Kalmucks, great gaunt eunuchs, Turkish bloods of the Effendi and Pasha class, men with hats on, as in London, men with black astrakan brimless caps on, just as in Teheran or Tiflis. There were women in veils and women in hats, and street vendors and beggars with horrors of open sores and mutilated limbs asking for alms. Some loitered talking and sucking cigarettes. The rest elbowed and rushed, twisted, turned and butted me off the narrow pavements into the complicated medley of vehicles in the road. Everywhere there was confusion, noise and bustle, but all this effort appeared to have no object. It had nothing in common with that great purposeful hum of traffic that is the voice of London.

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made of awkward cobbles. I was bumped by hurrying men going nowhere, and poked by the elbows at amazingly sharp bones of women who, I feel sure, were otherwise quite charming. But at last I came to where I should lodge in a street that is known as the Rue Glavanni.

In moments of depression my first night in the street comes back to me. The everlasting sun had banked the heat down in it, as sullenly as in an oven. It was full of the smell of open drains and garbage refuse thrown from the windows or tipped out of them by scavenger dogs. It was full of men arguing and the howls of itinerant sellers of fruit and trifles. Opposite unreceivable ladies played on a tin piano and called to sailor-men to come and drink. The creeping night was full of tickling, crawling things which, unless over-gorged at their supper, showed phenomenal speed in hiding under the pillow before the match struck. They were my old prison companions and great brown brute but soft London life had made me less friendly towards them.

Being unable to sleep, at dawn I crept out to the Petits Champs des Morts, which is a deserted graveyard that runs steep down to the Golden Horn and is covered with litter and full of tired cypresses. Above it had been built a cabaret, and there the night before I had spent an hour or two, smoking innumerable cigarettes drinking bad champagne at fabulous prices, sipping black coffee and watching over-painted middle-aged women skip lightly about a crazy stage. This is the night life of Constantinople. Now at dawn the

and the Golden Horn lay covered deep in fog. As I looked the morning breeze sprang up out of the Black Sea and swept away the surface of the fog, and one by one the minarets and tops of innumerable mosques came up into the sun, glittering like silver islands in the sea of mist.

I began work, without delay, at the Embassy as Assistant Military Attaché, and my life became full of politics. I found the Ottoman Empire utterly smashed, her vast territories stripped into pieces, and her conquered populations blinded and bewildered by their sudden release. The Turks were worn out, dead-tired, and without bitterness awaited their fate. Any terms of peace could have been imposed without resistance. Throughout the Near and Middle East there was stability and peace, for the British had stretched out their hands and there were garrisons holding all the vast territories that lie between Batum and Trans-Caucasia, North Persia, Basra and Jerusalem. Only in the East of Anatolia there were rumblings of revolt where the ninth and unbeaten Turkish Caucasian Army was reluctant to disarm, and where there was the menace of Russian interference. For a minute the British tasted the immense prestige of force and world power. The Allied prestige was enormous. It overshadowed the East. The eclipse of Russia and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire had cleared the ground, but left vast problems for decision. Countries had been torn from their old allegiances and ripped into pieces. The debris of the old order waited to be constructed into a new system.

As in the War Office so in the Embassy, I found the corridors crowded with experts and persons with interests. They came from Georgia and Azerbaijan, from Smyrna and the Pontus, from Armenia and Palestine. They brought with them their maps full of lies and they expected the almighty Allies with a few chosen words and a wave of the hand to decide their futures. As yet the chill of the reaction that I had seen coming in London had not reached Turkey. All waited on the Conference, and in Paris they were too busy with other problems nearer home and as yet had no time.

The chance of sound reconstruction slid away on the wings of time. Gradually the power of the Allies weakened, as the armies contracted to the centre with demobilization. One by one the garrisons were withdrawn, and the new countries still half-fledged were left to fend for themselves. Among themselves the Allies quarrelled. Each fought on the terms of its own national interests. For a minute they had thought in terms of the World. The Conference at Paris became heated with discord, and each decision made was but a compromise between rival claims. The reaction put out its cold hand, and the great dream of a new world dissolved and the nations came back to the cold light of facts.

But the problems of the Near East still remained undecided, and one by one under the pressure of circumstance each new country in pain and grief worked out its own salvation.

In Constantinople the Allied administration had been formed on the supposition that it was an expedient

for a few weeks. It had no order of efficiency. The High Commissioner was the Admiral Commanding the Mediterranean, and he had under him a mixed staff. The French General, Franchet d'Esperey, who had commanded in Macedonia, was left as Commander-in-Chief ashore. His British subordinate, General Sir George Milne, was in the quaint position of being an independent commander of a force called the Army of the Black Sea; but practically the whole of this force was also commanded, under the French General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, by the Allied Commander of the Constantinople area, and he was a British General, Lieut.-General Sir Henry Wilson. The relationship between the French and British commanders was unsympathetic, and the above description should be sufficiently complex to show the impracticable system that was in existence. There was no common policy nor even common sentiment among the Allies, and there was no co-ordination of men or force.

As to the British, there was no settled policy and for the first twelve months no general line of policy was laid down, except that the High Commissioner should avoid all complications that might affect future decisions. The results were pathetic, for the High Commissioners did little but watch each other jealously and ensure that none of their colleagues obtained any special advantages. The Near East waited for reconstruction, but the Allies did nothing that was constructive. Their decisions were all negative. Minor difficulties as they arose were referred to the home Governments, and decisions on these appeared to have no part in a general policy.

The main work at the Embassy was to avoid being definitely involved with any of the innumerable suitors who sought our help.

Thus in inaction time passed, while the problems at hand remained unsolved, while new complications appeared and definite dangers began to raise their heads. The golden opportunity to make a sound adjustment had passed.

I found the city of Constantinople little changed since 1916, except that the Allies had replaced the Germans and that the population had without effort transferred its allegiance from the one to the other. I looked in at the old prison. Jemal Bey was gone, but the officials and sentries were as courteous as before. Mazlum Bey was shut away somewhere, but I dared not see him, for I must have struck him. Even here in the centre, there was decay. The War Office door hung on a broken hinge, and the great courtyard was rank with weeds, as if no troops had ever drilled on it.

As I wandered about the city I searched for the stout old Turk I had learned to know in Anatolia. He was not there. Gradually I realized that in Constantinople there were no Turks, for they were all Levantines, and that herein lay the basic and fundamental problem of Turkey. Away in Anatolia were 7,000,000 ignorant Turkish peasants. They were hardy, honest and steady, but should anyone of them be taken and educated, he instinctively absorbed that which was superficial and he became a Levantine.

Though of stout material, the Turkish peasant cannot be built on, and thus his ruling class is always Levantine.

The one hope of the Turk lies in developing his own type of civilization, of educating his people on those lines, and ruling his people in this manner, and not by copying or mimicking the civilization of Europe as he has done hitherto. The Turks are Eastern. Anatolia and Constantinople are Eastern, and there is a great danger of treating them as if they were Western, because their people have white skins and some are Christians. The gulf between us and the Chinese and the Brahmin is no greater than that between us and the populations of Turkey.

Constantinople is the capital of *Levantinia*, and its citizens the Levantines are the evil results of the mating of the East and the West. East and West mate badly. They do not absorb each other satisfactorily. The West has superimposed itself on the East, and there remain but two roads to be taken. Either the East must accept the civilization of the West and the whole East become Levantine, or it must refuse it absolutely and revolt against it. But the moment the East refuses the guidance of the West, I found that the East respected not the spirit but the material results of Western civilization—its motor-cars, its luxuries, and, above all, the power and comfort that it gives.

The great city of Constantinople is itself a festering sore. There are in it no great ideals, no inspiration. It is a city of mean men living in mean streets. It is a city of intrigue, of backbiting, of scandal, of cunning, cowardly, treacherous men and dishonest women living in squalid houses. There is vast intrigue in little matters. There is no big idea, no character, no drive, no

continuous effort, no virtue. Spread over all is the fatalism that destroys effective action, and the mentality of Constantinople is complete. It is a city that has ruined the souls of all who come to it. It is the jumble of pieces of an ugly jig-saw puzzle that no one has yet made into a picture.

Yet it is set in an exquisite frame. Around it are the rolling uplands of Mashlak, the deep shady valleys of the Belgrade forest, the Bosphorus with its swift green rushing current, the fathomless blue of the Marmora and the hills of Anatolia rising peak on peak to the sunrise. Set in this girdle of wonderful seas, of wonderful hills and lit with gorgeous sunsets, it lies a festering pool of iniquity of all that is foul in human nature, and of all the squalor of deformed city life. Everywhere there are the same great contrasts of great beauty, exalted imagery, great possibilities and twisted ugliness, squalor, and futile mean effort, and foulness. Looked at from afar, it excites romance. It is exquisite with its mosques and minarets and baths and picturesque houses that are a joy to the artist but the despair of the tenant. As a wit once said, "Looked at as a whole it is beautiful, but looked at in bits it is a hole." To Constantinople have come many people and it has wound itself round their hearts, and when they have gone away they have been "home-sick" for it all their days.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Greek Crusade into Anatolia and the Awakening of the Turks

**I** FOUND that the Ottoman Empire was gone. In some grotesque Arabian-Nights-like manner it had been held together from the centre. The Allies had destroyed it. Its centre lay defeated and ruined. In its place there was nothing to offer but the still-born folly of "Self-Determination." For the time being the Allied garrisons were spread over all like the fine cords of a net that held the rough broken pieces together. But the cords began to slacken and break, as the garrisons came in, and the new nations so left found themselves surrounded by enemies and their frontiers but raw wounds.

**I** All that remained to the Turks of the Ottoman Empire appeared pathetically inanimate, but by one ill-conceived action the Conference in Paris stung it into new life. On the 15th of May 1919, under the orders of the Supreme Council, the Greeks landed troops at Smyrna and took over that area.

The preliminaries to that order showed clearly the trend of events. They showed too the atmosphere and conditions under which the Paris Conference worked.

In the hard years of the war secret treaties had been made to win allies. Italy had been promised great sections of Anatolia. Greece had been promised Western Thrace. Russia had been promised Constantinople. Much of the Middle East had been portioned out between England and France by the Sykes-Picot agreement. Promises had been made to the Arabs and the Christian minorities. By the time that peace arrived the objects of the war had changed. America, the new ally, had no part or lot in all these secret agreements that held her allies. But they were always in the background. They were confused by local and national hatreds and ambitions. They were complicated by the fact that many of them were contradictory, and by the declaration that "self-determination" was to decide the future.

The Italians had failed to get any support for their policy of annexation of South-Western Anatolia. The French and British would not stand by the promises they had made to the Italians at St. Jean de Maurienne in 1917, but they could not deny that they had made them. Feeling that facts were better than arguments, the Italians landed and set to work. Very rapidly, with troops and schools and traders, they had established themselves in the south of Anatolia and were rapidly nearing Smyrna. The Greek delegation in Paris strove for its claims in Anatolia, and especially for Smyrna. The French and British heard them with considerable sympathy. The American advisers refused to agree. They saw that Anatolia as a whole needed Smyrna as its window and door on to the world. Special com-

mittees could come to no agreement, and the Italians and the Greeks were at every point at variance.

Suddenly events took a dramatic turn. Signor Orlando and President Wilson quarrelled in Paris over Fiume. The former, with all the Italians, left the Conference. There was always in Paris a strong pro-Hellenic party, which now played its cards skilfully. M. Venizelos presented a sheaf of telegrams to show that the Turks were massacring in the Smyrna area, which was untrue. His subordinates produced excellent, but incorrect, maps to show the preponderance of the Greek population in and round Smyrna. The Great Three did not wish to see the Italians in possession, and they thought it an excellent method of calling Signor Orlando back to heel. He came, but too late, for already the order had been deliberately given by Mr. Wilson without reference to his advisers, and by Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau; and the Greeks were sent to Smyrna, not as a punishment to the Turks, but as a counterpoise to the Italians.

From this small spark arose a fierce conflagration. The Greeks came under the escort of Allied ships, and their occupation was announced to the Governor of Smyrna as that of the Allies. They began to massacre as soon as they landed. The officers and men of the British battleship moored close to the quay were ordered to remain inactive, while, within a few yards of their stern, Greek troops committed murder and foul brutalities. It is said that so difficult was it to prevent the British sailors from interfering that they were all ordered below decks.

From Smyrna the Greeks pushed out, massacring, burning, pillaging and raping as they went, in the ordinary manner of the Balkan peoples at war. Before them the Turks fled, till the country-side was full of refugees. Having extended beyond the line allowed to them, but having given themselves sufficient room to protect Smyrna, the Greeks sat down to consolidate.

Throughout Turkey awoke a new spirit, the spirit of a Turkish Nation. Once before the Turks had tried to turn their vast heterogeneous empire into a nation. In 1908 the Young Turks had overthrown the tyranny of Abdul Hamid and proclaimed a constitution with equal rights for all. They had set to work to *turkify* the Empire. The result had been misfortune. The Great Powers had at once reached out greedy hands for spoils. Austria had seized Bosnia and Herzegovina. Aided by Russia, Bulgaria had declared itself independent. The Italians had seized Tripoli and Bengazi. England and France had riveted tighter their economic chains.

The Ottoman Christians refused to become Turks, and in a fury at their disloyalty the Young Turks resorted to the policy of their predecessor, and by fierce massacre endeavoured to cut out of their body politic the cancer that ate their flesh. Their enemies saw their weakness, and then came the Balkan wars, and then finally the Great World War that had brought destruction and ruin. But the idea of a Nation had remained with them, of one loyalty, of one religion, of one blood, and of one tongue. They had been stripped of the vast territories that they held by force alone. They had ceased to be

ambitious to become a power in Europe, and their hopes were centred in Asia. Pared and pruned till little superfluous growth remained, the trunk of the Ottoman Empire appeared dead. The sap moved but little.

Now at the threat of final destruction the Turks woke from the dull apathy of defeat. They were to be wiped out. It was proposed to make a great Armenia behind them and perhaps a Greek Pontus State on one flank. There was the red danger of Smyrna in front of them, and the Great Powers were planning to control what was left. As had happened before in their history, in the hour of real disaster, the call went out and slowly the Turks roused themselves. A fierce vitality returned and they set about to save themselves from complete annihilation.

There were dull muttered threats at first. The 9th Caucasian Army stopped disarming. At Erzerum, at Konia and before Smyrna organized bodies came into existence. The refugees were armed. The hills became full of irregular bands that attacked the Greek troops. The peasants were enrolled. The Christians had already surrendered their arms at the orders of the Allies, but the Turks found arms in quantities and at once. The disarmament of the Turkish forces had been neglected by the Allied commanders. The ideas on the subject were grotesque. One staff officer of high rank was heard to say that it was unfair to disarm the Turks without disarming the Greeks as well, and one officer who commanded a detachment, when ordered to retire from Anatolia, brought with him a receipt signed by a Turkish general for the stores and ammunition

that he had handed over in considerable quantities. In Constantinople the renowned sailor, Raouf Bey, both officially and unofficially organized protest and resistance. Meetings were addressed by priests and fanatics; and that at the Municipal buildings in Stambul on the 20th of May was opened by a fierce appeal from a Turkish woman, one Halide Edeb Hanum, and was concluded with a few words of encouragement from French officers who were on the platform.

Far away in the wilds of Anatolia some form of organization began to show itself almost at once, and one man, Mustapha Kemal, stood out and dominated the situation. He was a capable staff officer of great energy, and a hard, calculating man. He had shown his capacity on many fronts. He had organized the guerrilla warfare against the Italians in Tripoli. He had commanded the gendarmery divisions in Gallipoli and held up the Australian advance and had saved the Turks from defeat. In Syria he had been given a poor handful of men, and with these he had gamely tried to withstand Allenby and to organize a new front at Aleppo. After Enver and his colleagues had fled, Mustapha Kemal had remained, and his influence among the troops and the people was great. He had been appointed as Inspector-General of the northern section of Anatolia, and there he went in March 1919. He left Constantinople determined to organize some show of resistance. He found little response among the tired people, who prayed only for peace and for time to plough their fields. But the landing of the Greeks, the threat of final destruction, and the wave of hatred that ran through the country

gave him his chance. He seized it. Help and encouragement came from Constantinople and from every side. On the old framework of the Ottoman army he grafted the hastily raised irregulars, and as it grew the force was directed towards the Greeks.

As yet the Turks had worked with caution. They showed their defiance in sullen disobedience to the Allied Control officers. The efforts at resistance were local and scattered and mainly effective in the danger zones close to the Greeks, where the refugees organized gladly. The leaders of the disaffection had crept away back into the eastern and inaccessible parts of Anatolia, to organize at Siwas and Erzerum. They expected that at any minute the Allies would send troops and crush them down.

If the movement was to be dealt with some immediate action was needed. The British High Commissioner wired repeatedly for permission to act. The Grand Vizier, who believed that the strict carrying out of the Armistice was the one hope of Turkey, became apprehensive and asked leave to deal with the danger. But the Allied Governments were feeling the anti-war reaction. They were being bombarded with demands for demobilization and retrenchment. They dared not involve themselves in further commitments. They gave orders that no steps were to be taken in the matter, which to them appeared to be one between the Sultan and his subjects. They refused to allow the Sultan enough troops or a free hand to deal with the position. They made light of the danger of the situation, and then turned to other problems.

Very soon the Turks began to realize that the Allies would not, or could not, take steps against them, and at the end of June they came out more boldly into the open. Irregular troops with a backing of regulars continually harried the Greeks, and sometimes there were fierce engagements. By July a clear-cut organization, grouped round Mustapha Kemal at Erzerum, had come into existence and the hitherto scattered and separate centres of revolt were co-ordinated within it. It was directed by capable brains. It was assisted by great enthusiasm and great hatred. The army grew, and it met with no opposition. The organization and the military forces now began to move westwards, leaving only sufficient troops to guard against aggression from Armenia. They came to the railway at Angora in December 1919, and, making the new head-quarters there, they moved down the railway and took over the junction of Eski-Shehir and the line to Konia. The British had orders to avoid any complications and they retired as the Turks advanced, so that by April 1920 the whole of Anatolia, except the area round Smyrna held by the Greeks, was in the hands of the "Nationalists," as the Turks under Mustapha Kemal were now called. Behind a screen of irregulars they organized, collected money and formed an administration. †

As Mustapha Kemal became a power the government in Constantinople lost in importance. All Turks were united in protest at the landing of the Greeks. But whereas the Sultan and Damad Ferid, the Grand Vizier, believed that the salvation of Turkey lay in obedience to the terms of the Armistice and so winning the con-

fidence and good-will of the Allies, Mustapha Kemal believed not at all in the Allies. He saw that they had decided to destroy Turkey. He believed that the Turks could only save themselves by their own strong right arms. He had already succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. The Allies had done nothing against him. The Greeks were tied to their area. Their atrocities had filled him and his supporters with wild rage, for they despised these Greeks as their late subjects. They hated the Allies but little less for sending them. When ordered to return to Constantinople Mustapha Kemal had refused. Damad Ferid was a fierce old man and he dismissed Mustapha Kemal from the army. Personal hatred and pique became an element in the quarrel. A breach opened between the government in Constantinople and the administration in Angora. Then Damad Ferid fell from power and the Nationalists gained control of the Constantinople cabinet. In turn they were ejected, and the Sultan and Damad Ferid Pasha and their supporters, appealing in vain to the Allies for help, set out to crush the "rebels" in Anatolia. They employed Circassians to fight them, under a certain Ahmed Anzavour. The breach was complete, and henceforth Angora went its own way from step to step until it proclaimed itself an independent government, while the Constantinople government, tied hand and foot by the Allies, sank to the position of the borough council of Stambul, and the Allied control became valueless.

Finally, feeling their strength and showing the fortitude and courage that more than once in their history saved

them from destruction, the Turkish Nationalists had on the 28th of January 1920 published their National Pact. They proclaimed the objects for which they fought and swore that even to annihilation they would strive till they possessed Anatolia, Constantinople and Eastern Thrace, free of foreign interference. It was the declaration of the death of the Ottoman Empire, and of the existence of the Turkish Nation. The birth and rapid growth of this had been ignored by the Allies. Now it stood out aggressively, asserting its claims and its power to enforce them.

The success of the Turkish Nationalists, due as it was to the sudden and unexpected vitality that they had shown, was aided by a complicated mass of other circumstances.

The Greeks had hardly landed before they encountered Italian opposition. As the Greeks pushed out, the Italians continued to advance, until they met as rivals. At one point, on the 2nd of June 1919, their troops opened fire on each other at the village of Cherkas Keuy, and only with great tact was an open breach between Rome and Athens avoided. The Italians, piqued and disappointed, encouraged the spirit of Turkish revolt. Too late they realized that they fanned a fire that would singe their own beards. Before the rising conflagration, which they had helped to light, they retired. There were serious domestic troubles in Italy. The people demanded demobilization and threatened revolution. Rather than be involved in fighting the Italian Government withdrew, and gave up the territory on which they had set their hearts. But as they went they sold their arms

and equipment to the Turk, and for many months they were his main source of supply for war material.

Aided thus in the south, the Turks found other helpers in the north. As the Bolsheviks slowly advanced, steadily pushing the armies of counter-revolution under Denikin before them, the British troops retired out of the Caspian and across the Caucasus. Their retreat encouraged the Turks, who received from Moscow welcome messages and more welcome money. The Allies were their common enemies.

The Turkish Nationalists directed their energies primarily against the Greeks, but the Greeks were the agents of the Peace Conference, and rapidly the hostility of the Turks was directed against the Allies. Until it had forced itself upon their attention, the Nationalist movement was viewed with little interest and no hostility by the Supreme Council, despite the constant telegrams of warning from the High Commissioner and the admonitions of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

When late in 1919 the position was recognized, the jealousies between the Allies prevented any effective action. The Italians were already at loggerheads with the Greeks and helping the Turks. Compromise between the many conflicting ambitions was the only hope of common action. The British were often stubborn and their subordinates were sometimes unwise, but as a whole they were prepared to sacrifice much to maintain the Entente. From the first days of the Armistice, however, the French were suspicious. They believed that they were to be cheated of the good things

of victory. There was no common enemy in the Near East, and there remained only the debris of dead systems, out of which much of value might be extracted. They found the British already in possession. They were determined not to be jockeyed out. For two centuries or more the British and the French had been rivals. In the face of a common foe, for a brief period, they had combined to crush the upstart Germany, and then in 1918 they took up again their ancient quarrel where they had laid it down in 1913. In the Near East the Great War, which was to have been an ending, became no more than a brief interlude in the long struggle between the rivals for the hegemony of Turkey.

Within a week of the signing of the Armistice the French were issuing nationalization papers to enemy subjects who possessed business or property interests in Turkey, and so endeavoured to annex the trade. Monsieur de France, the High Commissioner, and Franchet d'Esperey, the Allied General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, were openly anti-British. They assisted the enemy. Thus the Allied High Commissioners refused passports to the family of Enver Pasha. The French supplied them. The High Commissioners ordered the arrest of Djavid the Salonika Jew, the Minister of Finance to the Committee of Union and Progress. The French smuggled him into France. In May 1919, French officers spoke at public meetings against the Greek landing in Smyrna and encouraged Turkish resistance. As early as June 1919, M. Pichon was in private correspondence with the Prince Heritier, and had promised him assistance to gain Turkish aspira-

tions. The *Moniteur*, the *Stambul* and other papers were subsidized with French money to publish anti-British articles. Major Labonne, the French representative at Afion-Kara-Hissar, Colonel Mongin at Angora, and General Bathélemy, the French Military Attaché in Constantinople, were openly with the Turks.

For a short while the French used the Greeks. Even as late as June 1920 they advised them to advance, so as to get the Turks off the railway. Then they threw them over. As it became evident that the English had taken the Greeks under their protection, so, to neutralize this, the French became Turkophile, and in October 1921 M. Franklin Bouillon on behalf of the French Government made a secret treaty at Angora. That treaty was dishonourable not so much in its terms as in the secrecy with which it was made. The French supplied the Turks with information as to the Greek forces and our own. The culmination was the great betrayal at Chanak, when on the 22nd of September 1922 they withdrew and left the British alone to face the oncoming Turks.

These are only a few of the countless similar incidents, but they showed the blind folly that made the Entente in the Near East a delusion. In France suspicion died slowly. England, despite the Entente, still appeared as the cunning monster which had stolen its colonial empire from the French. Sound public opinion throughout England was only too eager to forget the ancient rivalry and to allow France to attain her just aspirations. It realized that Allied solidarity was the one hope of sal-

vation for ruined Europe, but it met with little response ; and from the end of 1919 onwards the Entente split until the French gradually whole-heartedly backed the Turks, and the British half-heartedly backed the Greeks.

The Greeks were from the beginning in a bad position. They strained for greatness. Their resources were meagre and their ambitions great. They set out on a crusade backed by the Allies. But as soon as they left the seashore they found themselves in a barren wild country, and were deserted by the Allies and eventually warned that they must evacuate. They endeavoured to annex lands to which they had no rights except those of force, while on the other hand they were opposed by a people fighting desperately for their homes.

They played, moreover, at being the champions of their oppressed fellow-countrymen in Anatolia, but this was but a fancied rôle. I remember well an incident that aptly illustrated this. One day, M. Canelopoulos came to the Embassy.

"I hope," said the High Commissioner, "that your Excellency's troops will advance no further into Anatolia, for, if they do, I fear that all the Christians may be murdered."

"I hope," replied M. Canelopoulos, "that the massacres begin soon, for we have need of a *raison d'être* for advancing." And I could only think of the incident a few weeks before when, in fear of the Turkish irregulars, the Greek population had flocked out of the village of Aidin behind Smyrna to follow the retreating Greek troops to safety, and how the Commanding Officer had driven them back knowing that they would be

massacred because "he needed a *raison d'être* for advancing into and beyond Aidin."

At home the Greeks were unstable. They grew tired of war and the suppression of their liberty. In November, 1919, M. Venizelos warned the Supreme Council that Greece could not continue to keep up a huge army to police Smyrna. The Greeks were in the unfortunate position of the man who put one finger into a sausage-machine and then when he wished to withdraw he could not and had to go through and become a sausage altogether.

‡ Aided by the dissensions of the Allies, by their pre-occupation and by their inability to take military action, the Turks succeeded. They found many Allies. Central Asia with Bokhara, Samarkand and Afghanistan was prepared to be troublesome. The British retreat out of the Caspian, their withdrawal in Anatolia, their inability to act in Persia and their weakness in India encouraged many to break out. The Kurds were angry at the idea of an Armenian State, and in June 1919 they became a menace to Irak. The Tartars of Nachivan and the Emir Feisal and the Arabs were disgruntled. In all directions were potential allies and Mustapha Kemal with uncommon skill roused dissatisfaction, raised the hopes of resistance or of advantages to be gained, and turned all the eyes of the dissatisfied towards Angora.‡ The Turkish nation was facing a Christian crusade. It became itself the forefront of a crusade and behind it muttered and growled all Asia ready for revolt.

## CHAPTER XII

### The Pleasant Life of Constantinople and the Signs of Danger

FOR the minute there was a lull, and only in the distance came the dull mutterings of the gathering storm. Constantinople had ceased to be the heart of a great empire, but by its geographical and its religious position it remained the centre of a complicated web. Sitting there in the centre we could feel the storm as it rose and its first faint tremors shook each strand of the web. From far out in Central Asia, from the Balkans, from Russia and the Caucasus, from Arabia and Anatolia came reports of danger. The British High Commissioner sent out repeated warnings, but the Great Four in Paris ignored them. They thundered out their orders to the World as if they were gods, but there was no bolt with the thunder, and it was but empty rumbling.

Of weakness there had been warnings enough. Italian troops had mutinied when ordered to Albania. French sailors had mutinied in the Black Sea. British soldiers had marched up to the War Office in Whitehall to protest against the slowness of demobilization. The Great Four gave their orders, but they had no power

left to enforce them. This fact the East was gradually realizing.

In December 1919 the French had taken over Syria and Cilicia. The Allies were retiring gracefully out of Anatolia, without incidents. The Greeks appeared firmly established round Smyrna. The Nationalists were constantly reported to be growing strong, but beyond irregulars and guerrilla fighters they had shown little real strength.

For the time being Constantinople was untroubled. The Allies had come to the city in victory. The Christians and even the Turks had welcomed them with joy. They came as deliverers and they came with their pockets stuffed with good money. They spent it liberally. They were in the "care-free" state that characterized the early months of the Armistice. The cafés, restaurants and dancing-halls, that had catered for the Germans, now catered for them, and the black-eyed Greek and Armenian girls, who had been kind to "Fritz," were now lavish in their attentions to the British and French soldiers. They lived as liberators, heroes and victors among a friendly population, and they paid their way without undue argument. Their admirers put away carefully their fezes, which were wrapped up in tissue paper against the future, and bought hats and account-books in honour of the allies and as a sign that the Turks were no more.

Life was gay and wicked and delightful. The cafés were full of drinking and dancing. There was none of the clogging drag of home ties. It was good to go to the Tokatlian Hotel and hear the renowned Tzigane

orchestra play its sighing gipsy songs and to catch the eyes of pretty girls and to dance with them between the tables. It was good when it was hot to stroll into the garden of the Petits Champs des Morts, while the night hid the refuse in the grave-yard below, and watch the cheap artists on the stage and drink black coffee and discuss the crowd that sauntered by under the lime trees, and bandy jokes in broken French with the *demi-mondaines*, and play at being a millionaire.

It was good to take ship and sail away between the islands of the Marmora to bathe in cool coves or up the Bosphorus, from the terrace of some palace, to dive into the swift stream and battle with it. Houses and cars and motor boats were there for the asking, for the army supplied them out of its liberal purse or by requisition. Every one expected the occupation to last only a few months, and they revelled while they had the opportunity and the money. For myself I did not unpack for the first six months, thinking that the end must come soon.

There were quaint forbidden tea-parties in Chichli, the suburb of Pera, to which came Turkish ladies just reaching out to grasp their new found liberty. They encouraged me to talk my broken Turkish. They cooed and complimented me on a fluency that I did not possess, until I grew hot and awkward and my field-boots seemed long and my spurs caught in the fringes of the ridiculous furniture. Their rooms were arranged in Victorian fashion with hard straight chairs and useless tables and pictures in shell frames and fans and feathers. When we had talked of the weather and my extensive knowledge of Turkish, there was little left to be said. In cool rooms

that shut out the dusty streets and the blazing sun they sat with folded hands. As was the girl I had seen long ago in the office of the Governor of Stambul that day I came from the prison, they were dainty, exquisite and scented. Their eyes were black and deep, their skins white as alabaster and where it stretched over bones the blue veins showed through. They were aristocratic and courteous, but incredibly dull, except that sometimes a topic would touch politics or war or the Nationalists, and then their bodies would stiffen and the languid depth would go out of their eyes and they would be alive; for they love and hate well and are fierce, cruel and fanatical patriots.

The old order and the harems were gone. Economic considerations had destroyed them. "In the old days," said one dame, "there were palaces and gardens and slaves and servants and these things might have been, but how can my husband expect to shut me up in a two-roomed flat?" At tea-parties they were stiff and formal, but under other circumstances one learnt more of them.

As often, though it was forbidden, I rowed myself down one June evening from the summer Embassy, that is on the cool hills just below the Black Sea, to the terrace garden of some Turkish friends. Their hospitality was extensive, and evening changed to night with pale stars striving with the saffron of the sunset. One by one came rowing boats and from them landed Turkish ladies, girls and old women, who talked awhile under the veil of the gloaming and then went elsewhere. They said shameless open things to each other and to

me, and they laughed softly together. They were frankly sexual. But before their men they are reserved, for the Turks are eaten up with a wild jealousy that has no basis in their religion, but is animal and natural. They are infuriated at the sight of their women with a foreigner, as we British are.

It was late when I rose to go, and two girls volunteered to row me back upstream. They sculled well. The party saw us to the steps of the terrace with all the old-world courtesy that might have been for a Pasha. A yellow moon, warm from the day, had crept across the sky. The villages were all asleep. Across the stream a mile away the hills of Asia were silhouetted against the sky and on the shores the shadow was deep, rich-coloured and deep as a bowl of wine. A motor boat of an allied general raced by without lights. The waves slapped us softly and went in long ripples to lap and break among the broken terraces on the shore.

Suddenly from a balcony came the sound of a harp. It was Madame Sabline, a great lady of the late Czar's court, who had escaped out of the terror of Russia, who played. Each note, each run, the melody came in exquisite perfection soft and clear to us across the moon-lit water and in the silence broken only by the sound of distant dogs barking and the creak of some wood ship at anchor. The two girls whispered to each other and rowed again and laughed together, and their laughter was as soft as the bubbles that sang against the boat as we cut our way forward.

But between them and me a great gulf was fixed. We had nothing in common. The music, the moon, the

beauty meant other things to them. I could see the shimmer of their long white silk gowns as their bodies, ripe and supple, swung as they rowed. White silk scarfs were over their hair and wound round their necks so that they seemed like hoods. In the half light their eyes looked out black and alluring and enticing. I was caught by a subtle attraction, by curiosity, by the lure for the forbidden and the unknown, by the pulse and tingle of desire. I was dealing with unknown worlds in shadows. Behind them seemed mystery and the East. Yet in the moonlight their skins gleamed as white as any Saxon's. As they spoke there was none of the harsh gutturals of the Arab. The scent of them was the scent of powdered Paris, and not the greasy odours of the East. Yet, except desire, between us there was nothing in common, neither religion nor language, nor habits nor morals.

I found the Greeks and Armenians liberal in their favours. Their soirées and tea-parties were gay. They chattered in the ugly French of Pera or in pidgin English and broke off at times into their own hoarse languages. They were full of clumsy subtleties and crude *double-entendres*. Spoken with every conceivable accent the word "shocking" appeared to be the dominant feature of their lives. Even at their pleasantest they were irritating. They had an ulterior motive of gain in every action. They irritated because they aped the European. They played at being of the West and civilized, but between them and the European was a gulf as wide as that between the Turk and the British, and it had no subtlety or charm or mystery to hide it.

The life was full of intrigues and counter-intrigues. All the complications that had formed the varied texture of Ottoman rule remained. Religions and creeds strove one with another. The European Powers struggled to get a privileged hold and oust their rivals. All the countless peoples of the city worked for different ends, and the old control was gone. The old system of Government and the regular routine of bribery had disappeared, and no central policy or power dominated the situation.

We had strict orders to avoid all complications, but, strive and struggle as it might, the Embassy became often enmeshed sometimes in some new quarrel and sometimes in some rivalry centuries old. It was in a false position. Its hands were tied. A thousand constructive and active decisions were required. It was ordered to be negative and inactive. The simplest problem would be found to be complicated. It would, for example, contain questions affecting Italian *amour propre*, special French capitulation rights, aspirations of the Armenians and the Arabs, and American trading rights; and there was no government or power to override or co-ordinate these and settle the problem. Outside events affected the situation each hour. A Bolshevik success, a riot in India, the formation of an American trade corporation, materially influenced each issue. We were lost in the vast muddle of trade, religion and politics that made an unholy tangle.

Many of the intrigues were parts of mere political and local fracas, but some had world-wide significance. For close on sixteen centuries there had been a battle royal

between the Pope and the Patriarch and the centuries had not reduced its virulence. The quarrel began with the transfer of the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine in 330 A.D. As the rivalry between the capitals of Old and New Rome increased that between the prelates kept pace, for the bishop of Constantinople aspired to equality with the bishop of Rome. It grew bitter in the eleventh century and culminated in the excommunication of the Patriarch Cerularius when at 9 a.m. on the morning of the 16th of July, 1054, the papal legates laid the bull of excommunication on the altar of St. Sophia. That marked one of the great points in the world's history, for on that date the Eastern church and the Byzantine political system broke away from the West. The quarrel was embittered and the hope of reconciliation was destroyed by the crusades and especially the fourth and most scandalous crusade. Mohammed the Conqueror found it to his advantage, for the citizens of Constantinople were bitter against the Pope of Rome and refused all help. He and his successors used it as a lever against Christian Europe and the Patriarchate became a department of the Ottoman Empire. For a while, submerged below the Ottoman rule, the quarrel died down. It flared up again at the Armistice in 1918. Greece was among the victors. She dreamed of a Greater Greece and of herself as the heir to Byzantium as well as to the Old Greece. The Allies encouraged her. As she grew, so the Patriarch increased in importance and had the dream been realized the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople, surrounded by a growing Greek Empire and looked to by the ruined

churches of Russia and Bulgaria, would have been a worthy rival to the Pope.

That dream was broken, but the old quarrel took a new shape; for the Archbishop of Canterbury began an extensive flirtation with the Patriarch. He persuaded the Patriarch Meletios to recognize the orders of the Anglican church. There was much rejoicing in the Church of England, but the Archbishop never realized that for his part he was expected to produce not fine words about spiritual reunion, but horses and men and guns. In the failure of the Allies came ruin to the Patriarch.

For myself I found the greatest problem was to arrive at the facts and the truth of any subject. Facts, as we understand them, did not exist. For an example, to us the figure "2" represents a definite entity. In Turkey it was a hazy outline and wandered down to zero on one side and up to a thousand on the other. The art of lying had been carried to such a finish as to complicate life unduly. With us lying is a luxury for which we have to pay dearly, but in Turkey it was a necessity of life. Everything said by anyone was automatically a lie, and the lie was no simple, straightforward lie but a complicated affair sometimes with an object, often based on a substratum of truth, but just as often it was a matter of habit. Life was spent in doing mental addition or subtraction sums and guessing at the answers.

That subterranean mentality was the essential part of the life, and it was aptly illustrated by the history of a friend of mine. He was a Scotchman and over fond of power. He was also a friend of Damad Ferid Pasha,

the Sultan's brother-in-law and the Grand Vizier, and he advised him. The Grand Vizier believed that this gentleman was an official agent of the High Commissioner. Admiral Sir John de Robeck and Mr. Ryan, his Dragoman, explicitly and repeatedly informed Damad Ferid that we had no such agent, but he persisted and following the advice that he received from the Scotchman he did many stupid things and then felt aggrieved because the British Government refused to support him. Eventually after a heavy luncheon and over a cup of coffee in his palace on the Bosphorus I ventured as a friend to mention the same fact to Damad Ferid. He pondered for a while and then he said,

"Then why did this gentleman meddle in politics?" and I replied,

"But His Excellency, the High Commissioner, has often warned Your Highness. Why would you not believe him?"

Then he pondered again for a while, and he said,

"The greater the man, the greater the liar."

Like animals that are soft and unprotected, the Christians of Turkey have a subtle extra sense of danger at a distance. Before the end of 1919 they realized that the position was changing. The soirées grew less in number and fezes began to reappear in the streets of Pera. The run on Homburg hats was over.

Moreover, Constantinople was not showing itself duly responsive to the vaunted civilized rule of the Allies. Trade was stagnant. The money-changers misused the market at their pleasure. Prices had bounded up unchecked and profiteering was general. The streets

of the city were dirtier than before. There was more open immorality and blatant drunkenness than in the days of the Turks. There was less justice, and that only rough justice dished out by inexperienced officers. The Capitulations had been extended to all the Allies and half the city paid no taxes, so that the municipal services had no means with which to do their work. Indiscriminate requisitions far in excess of the military requirements of the force had annoyed the householders and the well-to-do of all creeds. There was little or nothing that the Allies could point to with pride, and already the people of Constantinople sighed for the efficient Germans.

As ever, while the Christians lived in terror, the Turks sat placid and unmoved, waiting what should come. I wandered in the Oriental quarters of Stambul and down by the palace and the village of Beshik Tash. The men lounged and smoked in the open in front of the cafés or squatted in their shops. Their houses were blind with all the windows covered with lattices and the doors closed and no sign of life or movement. The houses were dumb and blind but behind the lattices were women watching and now and again, as I passed, I heard a little laugh or a quick drawn-in whispering. In the Christian quarters men in shirt-sleeves and women with frowzy hair and frowzier clothes leaned out of the upper windows the live-long day. All the lower windows were guarded by strong bars and the street doors were of heavy iron. I visited many houses and rang clanging cracked bells. Some one would inspect me through a grating, and when I had stated my name, nationality and business, the

information was called to the upper stories by shrill, unmusical voices. Then with the clanking of chains and grinding of locks the door would be opened a little and closed again as soon as I was within. Such, even when the Allies were in occupation and the danger was but distant, was the fear that lay heavy on this city.

Outside the life of the town, bringing their own ways of life and their own gaiety, came Russian refugees by the tens of thousands, aristocrats of the old régime and bourgeoisie of all sorts and kinds. As long as they had money they lived gaily and then they were absorbed among the beggars or the restaurants or into other countries. The men of all classes did little to earn respect. The women, whether the grand dames from the court or the dancers of the Imperial ballet or the wives of merchants or even the *demi-mondaines*, had an unrivalled charm. They had all the delicacy, breeding and taste that the life of Europe and its education can give. They had all the placid fatalistic acceptance of facts that marks the Eastern. They had none of the hard calculating mind of the Englishwoman which even when she has given her heart still goes on doing sums of "worth while." They had a brilliance and a culture that crowded out the dullness of the Turkish ladies. They had a charm and breeding that showed polished beside the rude strainings of the local Christians. They were not immoral for they were non-moral.

"Vous serez toujours fidèle?" said an enamoured British officer.

"Ah! oui! jusqu'à la dernière fois," replied his Russian dame.

They were irresponsible in their decisions. They enjoyed the good things of life to the maximum and without regret. When evil came, they faced it placidly. They swept into the life of Constantinople until every wife, whether Turk or English or Greek, learned to hate them.

In the excitement of the political intrigues, in watching the play of forces, in bathing and picnics in the rich sun, in exploring in twisted alleys and ancient *hans* and the vaults below Stambul and the great mosques, I found time passed rapidly.

Suddenly the first buffets of the threatening storm struck our web and shook it from end to end. "By the 10th of December 1919, the British had evacuated Syria and Cilicia, and the French, as always, still believing that they had somehow been tricked and misled, had taken over. They commenced to arm the local Armenians and to enlist them. Without hesitation the Nationalist Turks struck. They attacked the French at Marash and after a siege drove them out and besieged the garrison in Urfa, which made terms to be allowed to retire unmolested, but in the open country they were treacherously attacked and forced to surrender. The "National Pact" was proclaimed and signed by the members of the Ottoman Parliament which still sat in Constantinople. In the city, the Ministry of War and all departments began openly to work for the Nationalists and to send them arms and money and men. Any orders issued, or representations made, by the Allies were ignored, and marked hostility and disrespect were shown. A Nationalist Government was in power. On the 27th

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of January a dump of arms under a French guard in the Gallipoli peninsula was raided and cleared. Throughout Cilicia and in parts of Anatolia there were fierce massacres of Armenians, and in the middle of February the Bolsheviks captured Odessa and chased out the British mission, the British battleships and a horde of refugees. The threatened danger was on us.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Treaty of Sèvres. The Storm Bursts, 1920

**I**RRITATED by this show of resistance on the part of a defeated enemy, the Allies decided to teach the Turks a lesson. The British Commander, General Sir George Milne, had some idea of the strength of the Nationalists. The French from their Cilician experiences had more. The Embassies had very little and the Allied Premiers in Paris had no conception at all of the situation that now faced them. They did not realize that they were dealing with a live force and not with the decrepit relics of the old Ottoman Empire. Anatolia was not affected by an economic blockade, nor did it care whether or not it was recognized as one of the family of nations. It was only through Constantinople that punishment could be inflicted, and it was decided to occupy Constantinople officially on the 16th of March.

The occupation was to be carried out by Lieut.-General Sir Henry Wilson as the Officer Commanding the Allied troops of the area. The French and Italian Governments signed the instructions. Their departments in Paris and Rome held up the executive orders.

The occupation was carried out, but by British sailors and soldiers alone; and only when the French and Italians saw that it had been successful and that the whole control of the city and area would be in British hands, did they combine and claim a share in this control. Martial law was proclaimed. The life of the city was to continue as before. The Ottoman Government was allowed to work, but every branch was to be carefully supervised. The Ministry of War, the Admiralty, the customs, passports, ports, telegraphs and newspapers were watched and controlled by Allied officers. The Allied Police Commission already in existence was strengthened, and the French had some organization for the gendarmerie.

On the night prior to the occupation a number of prominent Turks were arrested as active supporters of the Nationalists. In the prisons there were already many officials and officers, accused of participation in massacres or ill-treatment of prisoners-of-war. They were all shipped off at once and imprisoned in a camp at Malta.

The story of these deportees is a sorry one. Among them were evil criminals, who had murdered prisoners-of-war. Many were ordinary normal Turks who had been leading men in Turkey during the war. Some were arrested on the poor evidence of a couple of Armenian women or on that of an enemy. More than one was arrested in error. They were imprisoned in conditions quite out of keeping with their rank or position. They were kept two years in confinement without being charged with any crime. They were herded all together,

those arrested for political offences old and new, and those for massacre, murder and evil crimes. Thus the foul beast Mazlum Bey from Afion-Kara-Hissar, who had murdered British prisoners-of-war and committed loathsome crimes and offences, was confined with Said Halim Pasha, the old Grand Vizier, who had opposed the declaration of war and had been persuaded by Enver Pasha against his better judgment to sign. It was as if the victorious Germans had shut Lord Balfour in with a gang of criminals like Crippen and Mahon. As pressed continually on the Home Government the matter could have been disposed of easily and well. A court could have tried each case, hung the murderer, sent the evil-doer to hard labour, released the innocent and, if considered necessary, interned those politically dangerous. But the affair dragged on, and late in 1921 all these prisoners without distinction were released, and those who wished it were shipped back to Turkey.

The results of these deportations were considerable. All Turks of military age began to leave for Anatolia, and all men of any importance made for Angora. The Sultan's advisers were believed to have supplied many of the names, and hatred against the Sultan increased. The belief in British justice suffered a rude shock. Many of the deportees were men of great importance. When released they became ministers and deputies in the Angora Government, and their hatred of the British was not diminished by their imprisonment, degradation and general treatment in Malta.

The deportations and the occupation of Constantinople encouraged the Sultan and his supporters. Both

he and his brother-in-law Damad Ferid Pasha were early convinced that Mustapha Kemal and the Nationalists were intent on forming a separate Government. It is hard to say how far this attitude on their part drove the Nationalists to separation, or how far the Sultan and his supporters knew their own countrymen well enough to realize that, if given a free hand, they would take this line. The Sultan endeavoured to involve us on his side. We struggled to keep clear, for in February 1919 the High Commissioner had received instructions to protect the Sultan, but to take no action against any Turks who might come into power, even if they were members of the old hostile Committee of Union and Progress, and on no account to become involved in local Turkish affairs.

Very soon the Sultan's enemies became our enemies, and, in acting in our defence, it was difficult to avoid acting on his behalf. To those on the spot to stand by the Sultan was clearly the sound policy. He represented the *de jure* Government. He was friendly, prepared to carry out the Allies' orders, and he was within their control. British interests were few. We required the Straits open, and fair play for our traders. We needed the moral support of the Khalif for our Moslem subjects. There was on us a moral obligation to protect the Christian minorities. In the early months of 1919 and in 1920, given moral support, a loan and a free hand, the Sultan could have asserted himself and dealt with the first efforts of Mustapha Kemal. The peasantry were still loyal. They believed that they were enlisting to save him. He sent his Grand Vizier hot-foot to

the Embassies with warnings and requests to be allowed to act. He was refused permission. He was tied hand and foot and then called upon to carry out the Allies' demands. As the power passed to the Nationalists, he became valueless. He was an old man, living in constant fear of assassination, and he was dominated by his Grand Vizier.

Damad Ferid was of a far different type. He was a stubborn, brave, unwise old man. He was an Albanian with a touch of Kurdish blood in him, and he had all the fierce hatred of the blood feud in his soul. He was a clansman without compromise. Throughout he had warned the British of the dangers and he had taken what steps he could to destroy the Nationalists, until the breach between Angora and Constantinople was broad and unbridgeable. His personality counted for much. His lack of compromise and his pursuit of his vendetta against his enemies made reconciliation impossible.

Faced by the same enemies, despite intentions to the contrary, we found ourselves working with the Sultan's party. Undoubtedly a number of the deportees were arrested at Damad Ferid's request. Now threatened by the Nationalists, we went a step farther. Sir George Milne sent one of his staff, Colonel Shuttleworth, to discuss with Zeki and Hamdi Pashas at the Ministry of War the formation of two divisions of royalist troops to be organized with British officers. As soon as these were ready, they were to be taken by sea to the north coast of Anatolia and marched in on the Nationalist flank and rear.

The Sultan bestirred himself. He issued an Imperial

*Irade* proclaiming Mustapha Kemal and his associates outlaws and a *Fetwa* which excommunicated them. He dissolved the Ottoman Government, and recalled back to power Damad Ferid, who had been forced to resign some months before. He tried to raise the Kurds to his aid. The Allies agreed and he arranged for arms and stores to be sent from the depots under Allied control to the Circassians fighting for him under Ahmed Anzavour. He sent troops to Yalova and Ismidt. Still the Allies did not back him fully. Few of the arms and stores reached the Circassians. The local officials held them up and these officials were under Allied control. Up to the end why we should not act together against a common enemy to our mutual advantage was not understood by the Sultan nor by Damad Ferid, nor yet by any reasonable person in possession of the facts.

The result of the Sultan's actions was negligible, but it drove the Nationalists to fury. They denounced the Central Government. They swore vengeance on Damad Ferid. They formed at Angora the Grand National Assembly to carry on the government of the country, as long as Constantinople was in bondage. They prepared to fight to the end.

Then the full storm burst on us with blow on crashing blow. Hardly had the occupation been completed before the Turks surrounded the British garrison at Eski-Shehir. All other garrisons and Control Officers had been withdrawn to avoid capture or arrest except this one, and it had been left on the railway junction to assist the retirement of Italian troops from Konia. The garrison cut its way out, but lost a number of

men and animals. The Italians with their line of retreat gone were forced to turn off at Afion-Kara-Hissar, and escape by the Greek zone and Smyrna. In Europe Germany showed signs of revolt, and a revolution in favour of the Kaiser blazed up for a while. Ireland was twisted in pain, and all the force of England was concentrated in holding her down. The Kurds were rising on the Mesopotamian frontier. Behind us in Eastern Thrace a certain Jaffar Tahir had raised the Turks, and they were arming and drilling and organizing from Adrianople.

Infuriated at the attitude of the Sultan, Mustapha Kemal and the new Government at Angora proceeded forthwith to make a military convention with the Bolshevik Government of Moscow. Denikin and his counter-revolutionary troops had been smashed. They had shown neither efficiency nor honesty. The Turks and the Bolsheviks had a common aim in the destruction of the British Empire, their common enemy. They struck at her feet in the East. The Bolsheviks seized Azerbaijan. By a concentrated action with the Turks from the south they forced Armenia to her knees, and captured Kars and Nakhitchewan. Now Nakhitchewan and Kars form the back door of Anatolia and a side door to Persia, and are on the way to Mesopotamia. The Allied general staffs became alarmed. They prepared plans to stop the Russian advance southwards. They feared Bolshevik propaganda on the heels of victorious troops. The British discussed the safety of Bagdad and Jerusalem and even produced schemes to cover the Suez Canal.

The Sultan's troops, sent to Yalova and Adabazar, refused to fight in the civil war. Those under Ahmed Anzavour were driven back, and wiped out, and he was himself killed.

In May the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres were published. President Wilson and the Americans had left the Conference in December 1919, and with them they took all their idealism. The Peace Conference reverted to old European methods and diplomacy. The secret treaties of the war, that had hovered behind the Conference like pale ghosts, afraid of the light from America, now came forward. The march of events had at last warned the Allies and they set to work to be finished with Turkey. The result was the Treaty of Sèvres.

It was based and bound on the secret treaties. Italy and Greece, before they entered the war with the Allies, had bargained for their prices and had been promised sections of Anatolia as payment. France had her aspirations, and England her policies. They were all fitted into the treaty. Annexation of territory was concealed behind the American idea of "mandates." Syria and Cilicia went to France. Smyrna and Western Thrace and most of Eastern Thrace to Greece. Italy got the islands. Russia had been promised Constantinople and the area of the Straits and the Bosphorus. But she was out of the running and they were put under an international régime with the Greeks down the western shore of the Marmora and on the Gallipoli peninsula.

The Turks, with Smyrna cut out, were to have Anatolia as far as the Georgian, Armenian, Kurdish,

and Mesopotamian frontiers, but every detail of their lives was to be supervised. There were Commissions and Sub-Commissions. There was the Sub-Commission of Organization to disband the Turkish army and to form the new forces of a limited volunteer army and gendarmerie. There was a Sub-Commission to look after custom officials, forest guards and urban and rural police. Nominal sovereign rights were left to the Turks, but they were bound hand and foot with rigid irons. Their finances were strictly controlled.

Attached to the treaty, and not made public until Damad Ferid had signed, was a tripartite agreement between England, France and Italy. It divided Anatolia into three pieces. In the Southern portion the "special interests of Italy were recognized." In the Eastern section "the special interests of France were recognized." The remaining portion was not allotted, but it was presumed that England would have "special interests" there. Beyond this all the sections of the old Ottoman Empire were portioned off to Arabs and Kurds and Jews.

It was incredible that under the conditions in existence at that moment such a treaty could have been proposed. The Ottoman Empire was dead, and so far as the treaty marked that fact it was of value; but it took no stock of the new forces, of the weakness of the Allies and the strength of the enemy. Compromises undoubtedly made it unreal. Those who framed it must have been completely ignorant of the position of affairs, and their advisers woefully ignorant of geography and ethnology. I was amazed at the attitude of some of the advisers.

On his way to Paris, one sat in my office and blandly discussed whether Proportional Representation rather than the Majority Electoral System had better be included in the constitution of the Kurdish state, about to be framed ; and for some time it was seriously considered giving the mandate of the Jewish home in Palestine to the Arab King of the Hedjaz. The treaty was grossly immoral. This portioning out of the homelands of a people into sections like slabs of bread to be devoured by various powers has, throughout modern history, been considered immoral. Moreover, by its "spheres of interest" it perpetrated the ancient rivalry between the nations in Turkey.

The publication of the terms had an instantaneous effect. All Turks realized that it meant their destruction. The sea-shore was to be taken from them, and they were to be confined to central Anatolia. A hostile Armenia was to be formed in their rear, and they were to be chained hand and foot by controls. Their attitude stiffened. They were now to fight not the Greeks alone, but all the Allies, to save themselves from annihilation. They at once attacked and captured the French garrison in Bozanti, and the French Government was glad to come to terms and sign an armistice with them.

The Turks set their teeth and reorganized. They smashed what was left of the Sultan's troops and finished the civil war. All dissensions and quarrels among them disappeared. The Eastern troops were put under Kiazim Kara Bekir and the Western under Ali Fuad Pasha with the central supreme command of Mustapha Kemal at Angora. Now all parties, except the immediate

entourage of the Sultan, combined in the struggle to save their country, and every Turk worth his salt became a Nationalist.

It was a fight to the finish. They closed in on the Allies in Constantinople. They attacked the French battalion that protected the coal mines at Zangulduk and this was at once withdrawn. The last few troops of the Italians scampered out of Anatolia to avoid destruction.

The Bolsheviks had pushed in across the Caucasus and, to avoid contact, as ordered by the War Office the British retired and so evacuated Batum and all the Caucasus. This left the flank of Wrangel's anti-revolutionary army exposed. The Bolsheviks had swung into northern Persia and with their coming the treaty signed between England and Persia on the 9th of August, 1919, and all the structure that was built on it, collapsed.

That treaty is worthy of a passing notice, for it aptly illustrates, from Persia, much that led to the failure in Turkey. It was a treaty made in haste and secrecy and only published when signed. It was done under the supervision of Lord Curzon, who as a distinguished amateur diplomatist had had an exceptional record of failure. It was made against the advice of many great experts, such as Lord Grey. It was the old diplomatic method of trying to get ahead of other Powers, but it only annoyed our Allies and helped to break the Entente. As in the Treaty of Sèvres, it ignored the size of the military forces of the British Empire. It took on vast commitments without the means to carry them out. The British army was being reduced to a few divisions.

These were needed for India and Ireland. It is not too much to say that if all the schemes of Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon had been carried out, troops would have been required to police a frontier from Burma to Teheran, from Teheran to the Caspian with a post at Constantinople. The Bolshevik advance finally disposed of that treaty.

The East was up. A sheet of flame ran across it. India was seething. A great Moslem pilgrimage to Kabul was in progress as a protest against British Christian rule. The Amir thinking that India was in disorder followed the tradition of his ancestors, declared war and advanced on India for his loot. The Hindus were unsettled and the Amritsar riots were a symptom. In Egypt there was revolt. The East was indeed aflame, and it was not merely the Moslem East for Hindus and Moslems in India, Syria Christians and Mohammedans in Syria against the French, and Copts and Moslems in Egypt, had combined for resistance on common grounds.

June found the British Empire in the East buffeted with great blows and rocking to its foundations. Of force there was none to employ. Ireland had absorbed the small army that the British were prepared to support. We had enmeshed ourselves in the wastes of Mesopotamia, and the Arabs rose against our benign rule on the 3rd of June. In Turkey the Nationalists had cleared all Anatolia of Allied troops, except the Greeks in the Smyrna area, and the British had fallen back on a line behind Ismidt to cover Constantinople. In front of them entrenched was the last remnant of the Sultan's troops. The Turks waited no more. Ali Fuad Pasha

attacked. He drove in the half-hearted Sultanic troops without effort, and they retired through the British lines. Without hesitation the Nationalists attacked the British. On the night of the 15th-16th of June three assaults were repulsed with difficulty. The French were hard pressed at Heraclea. Irregulars raided the villages on the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus and from Beicos opened fire on the fleet as it lay at anchor there. A shot or two struck the Austrian Embassy where the British High Commissioner and his staff were lodged.

I was asleep on a terrace in the Embassy when I was awaked before dawn by the rifle fire. There was confusion and panic and noise. Across the Bosphorus came firing and shouting. Below in the village on our side the Christians were running round in terror. A battleship opened fire with its light guns and a regiment of Indian infantry was hurried up. But it was a lesson. The raiders were the skirmishers of the Turkish Army. Constantinople, the High Commission, the handful of Allied troops lay naked and exposed to them except for the navy; and in an affair of this nature ships are of little value except for evacuation.

The few troops in the Asiatic shore were in detachments down the railway to Ismidt that runs along the shore of the Marmora. As soon as the Turks realized the position they proceeded to pass down the flank towards Constantinople. At Derindje the depot of stores was burnt and blown up in preparation for retreat. The long bridge on the railway beyond Guebze was mined for destruction. The Turks were seen to be massing for an attack on the Ismidt detachment. It

was a critical hour. The fleet opened fire and the great shells blew up the Cloth Factory of Ismidt behind which the enemy troops were concentrating, and did great damage. For the minute the Turks hesitated. On the Dardanelles they were pressing in and the defences and guns there were destroyed. All preparation for a hurried evacuation of the Allies' forces was made. The townspeople of Constantinople were in terror, for they could not but see what was happening. There were but two alternatives—to fight or run, and the Allies did not appear able or willing to fight.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Greeks save the Allies and thrust back the Turks

THE Allied Premiers looked round in despair. At last they half realized the situation. The East was up. The Bolsheviki were becoming dominant. The Turks were about to throw the Allied troops "bag and baggage" and in rout, out of Constantinople. Great Britain had her hands full. The few troops at her disposal were in Ireland. The Indian Army was doubtful in loyalty, and even its British officers were disgruntled with constant changes and the insistent threats of reduction. The French were busy in Syria and Africa and still afraid of Germany. The Italians were striving with the agonies of attempted red revolution. The Premiers looked round in despair.

Quiet, plausible, unmoved stood M. Venizelos. His eye-glasses and charm of manner give him an air of childlike simplicity, but, as ever, with careful shrewd calculation he was ready in Paris. At a reasonable price he was prepared to place the Greek troops at the disposal of the Allies. The price of more land round Smyrna and the immediate occupation of Eastern Thrace were at once agreed upon. The Greeks would do the

dirty work of the Allies. Moreover, as Mr. Lloyd George fully realized, Greece was always open to coercion by a Power with a fleet.

The Allies urged the Greeks to go forward at once. The French were as insistent as the British. They saw that a Greek advance meant a relaxation of pressure in Cilicia and the Turks off the Baghdad line. They urged General Paraskevopoulos, the Greek Commander-in-Chief, not to delay.

The Greeks advanced on the 22nd of June, 1920. On all fronts they met with easy success. Their regular, well-conditioned troops advanced with hardly a check. Eastern Thrace was at once occupied. The Turks fled. Jaffar Tahir, the Turkish Commander, was ignominiously captured. The Greeks marched into Adrianople, and close up to the city of Constantinople within long gun range, on the line laid down in the Treaty of Sèvres. From Smyrna three columns advanced. The one in conjunction with the British fleet went due north and cleared the south coast of the Marmora and took Brusa. The second advanced straight into the Turks at Alashehir, and then left the plains to mount the plateau and halted at Ushaq. The third from Aidin advanced out, keeping parallel with the column on Ushaq; and a division was sent to Ismidt to take over the peninsula and to cover the Allies in Constantinople. Everywhere the Turks had broken and retreated with little resistance.

The position was saved. The Allied Premiers were once more under the delusion that they were dealing with the scrappy remnants of the tumbled-down Ottoman Empire. They pointed to the Greek success as proof

that their advisers on the spot had been over-anxious and their information incorrect. But they had misread the real situation. The Turks were vigorously organizing away in Anatolia. The troops driven in by the Greeks were but screens of irregulars and outposts. The Turkish nation with its teeth set was straining to get ready. It was fighting for its very life.<sup>6</sup>

M. Venizelos had contracted to be allowed to advance as far as the main railway and to hold Eski-Shehir and Afion-Kara-Hissar. This was sound strategy with a good line along his front and a good railway to Smyrna and his base. But he stopped at Ismidt, Brusa, Ushaq and beyond Aidin in deference to the wishes of the Allies. In this decision lay disaster. The four columns were disconnected. Their communications with the base were good only in one case. Strategically their new line had nothing in its favour, and, if attacked by good troops, they must have been broken in detail. With the coming winter the Greeks were to suffer much and to gain nothing by their advance.

Meanwhile the Allies were content. Damad Ferid for the Sublime Porte signed the treaty in August, and preparations were made to put its provisions into force, even before ratification. The Turkish nation beyond the Greek outposts had been forgotten.

At this moment, had the Allies been prepared to make a milder peace, there is little doubt that this could have been done. The Turks were much shaken by the Greek attack. The Nationalist regular troops were not ready. If the Greeks continued to advance, they could not be stopped. The Turkish generals could give

ground to save time ; but it meant giving to their hated and despised enemy good pieces of Anatolia, and it meant that these had to be recovered. The Greeks were prepared to compromise, for they felt the strain. But the Allies upheld the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, and, within the Allied zone in Constantinople, Damad Ferid and the Sultan thundered out their hatred and were for no compromise.

By the autumn of 1920 the position had crystallized. The Allies with a handful of troops sat in Constantinople and held a small neutral zone round it, that contained the Straits and the Bosphorus. Beyond them and protecting them and their only protection was the Greek screen making a complete barrier on every side. And beyond that in Anatolia were the Turks working and organizing, growing formidable, and on their side were Time and Space and the unknown forces of Central Asia and Bolshevik Russia. Within the Allied zone the Powers quarrelled. The old intrigues were in full play. The nominal Turkish Government with the Sultan still remained, but it had become no more than the Borough Council of Constantinople, with limited powers. Except as an irritant, it had ceased to affect the situation.

Constantinople had become a backwater. The Home Government paid scanty attention to its representatives on the spot. I had always been surprised at the manner the advice and information offered by those on the spot was ignored by the Home Government. Hardly a recommendation on important subjects made by the High Commissioner was accepted. His warnings were

laughed at and his advice was passed over. He had not been consulted before the occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks. In its early stages he had wished to deal with the Nationalist movement, and he had been forbidden to do so. He had had no say in the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres. In every case his advice had been sound, and it had been ignored or listened to too late. Now the High Commission had become no more than a glorified post-office, with a department for forwarding and re-addressing letters and requests. There was an incident that aptly illustrated the position. Eighteen days after the issue of the Treaty of Sèvres no copy had reached the High Commission. Mr. Ryan, the Dragoman, when visiting the Grand Vizier, saw that he had several copies on a table, and Damad Ferid Pasha kindly gave him a copy. From this we discovered the exact details of the Treaty of Sèvres. It is said that Admiral Sir John de Robeck, the High Commissioner, telegraphed the same evening to the Foreign Office to the effect :

“ Beg to inform you Turks have to-day presented terms of Peace Treaty to Allies,”

and that the laconic reply came back :

“ High Commissioner’s number so and so not understood.”

That reply was symbolical of the relation between the Home Government and the High Commissioner. Had his advice been followed, or even listened to, in the early months of the Armistice, the *impasse* now arrived at would not have occurred. Wireless and tele-

phone and telegraph and swift ships and trains had withdrawn his power to act. A hundred years ago he would have acted quickly and decisively on his own initiative. The Empire was built by local action carried through by men of spirit. Now he was tied to the end of a telegraph wire and his orders were always to wait and remain inactive, while he watched chances slip away and disaster chase out victory.

In October 1920 I left Turkey on leave. Constantinople was short-circuited. The military decisions rested with the Greeks and the Turks. The peace decisions lay between Paris, Athens and Angora. As the last pawn in the hands of the Allies the city and area of Constantinople was retained.

I travelled on the Orient Express and there I found Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Tom Shaw, Mrs. Philip Snowden and a party of the leading Socialists from France, Holland and Belgium.

They had just returned from Southern Russia after a careful investigation into the results of the Russian Revolution. They were openly depressed. The so-called "Workers' Revolution," that had been acclaimed as one of the successes of the Labour movement, had proved a failure. It had been a vast experiment along lines preached by the Socialists, and it had brought nothing but black ruin. Without hesitation Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his friends pronounced Bolshevism to be a failure. They were convinced that fire and sword and the use of naked force were not the way to produce a new and perfect social order. They were opposed to "Force" in all its forms.

The Labour Parties of Western Europe and especially the British seemed at that moment to be at the parting of the ways. To attain their ends they had to choose between constitutional and legal methods or the line of "direct action" with strikes and sabotage and red revolution. They had to decide whether they would strive slowly to mould the present state of affairs into the form that they desired, or whether, as had been done in Russia, they would set to work to try, as a minority, to seize power, tear up and destroy the existing system and out of the resulting ruins construct a new state.

The "Third International," and the Russian Bolsheviks behind it, claimed their allegiance. The "Second International" had proved to be too much a mixture of milk and water. The attempt to form a "Two-and-a-Half International" had caused more humour than result.

On that journey I saw that even these International Socialists at times showed an insular spirit, even some patriotism and a touch of imperialism that sat more naturally on them than Internationalism. At times they seemed to find their "brother" socialists of other nations difficult to put up with, and the "brotherhood of man" a phrase easier to discuss than to live up to; so that when Stambulinski, the peasant premier of Bulgaria, came aboard the train they found little in common with him.

We passed through northern Italy and there at Milan we saw red revolution lashing out to get control, bringing with it ruin, disorganization and despair.

We raced through France and, having passed the time in pleasant conversation, we came once more to England.

## CHAPTER XV

### England in the Post-War Reaction

**A**T a casual glance the change in England from the early days of the Armistice appeared small, but it was in reality fundamental. The tide of the war spirit, of patriotism, of pulsing enthusiasm, that had carried men laughing gaily to almost certain death and women to the heights of self-denial, was gone. The people now rode wildly on a tide of a new prosperity. Money was abundant and freely spent. There was a great rush of trade. That life was a gamble and uncertain and to be enjoyed to-day while it existed, that the future was so problematic that saving was mere folly, were relics of the War. They tinged life in every stratum of society. Old classes were dead or dying, and new classes arising. The new conditions of life were not yet understood nor assimilated. In places there was irritation that automatically life had not fallen back into the placid grooves of pre-war days.

I was determined to find out here at the centre the causes and the reasons that had led to the follies in Turkey. I probed in vain, for no one knew. It seemed to be imagined that the policies and decisions were made in Constantinople, whereas in Constantinople

it was imagined that they were made in London.

I had hardly arrived, however, before my leave was cancelled and I was once more employed in the War Office. From this vantage-point the causes of British error in the Near East became apparent. As in Constantinople the High Commission, so in London the Foreign Office, was short-circuited. Foreign policy was exclusively directed by Mr. Lloyd George from No. 10 Downing Street and by the Cabinet Secretariat who lived across the other side of Whitehall.

The strength of the British Constitution has lain in its permanent officials who coming from one class inherit traditions of offices and policies, who are unmoved by failure or success and without brilliance or marked originality keep in the stern straight channel of common sense the stream of politicians who come into office above them. Under the system now in vogue the permanent officials were ignored; the traditional policies were neglected; old knowledge was consigned to dusty shelves; and the enthusiasms of the minute, not viewed on the background of codified experience, led the politicians into the bypaths of adventures. The control of Parliament in foreign affairs existed no more, for, at least publicly, the Foreign Secretary accepted the position.

The attitude of Lord Curzon at this date was hard to explain. He was a man of great ability and long experience. His brains were exceptional, but, as the muscles of a stout man are overlaid with fat, so they were overlaid with an enormous pomposity. His tactlessness had become a proverb, and his remarks were quoted in every capital of Europe not for their wit,

but for their stupendous conceit. His manners with his staff and friends, with the Houses of Parliament, and with Foreign Ministers raised constant irritation, and had an evil effect. He had many enemies, and he attracted no friends. In 1920 he was fully aware of the errors that Mr. Lloyd George was making in the Near East, and yet he allowed the Foreign Office to be short-circuited and silenced, and his own views to be ignored; while errors were made that endangered the peace of the world and the prosperity of future generations. Rumour has it, and it may well be true, that Mr. Lloyd George remarked, "Behold, I am honoured with a gilded doormat."

But the cardinal cause of failure lay far deeper in the loosening of grip in England. The treaty with Turkey had been postponed partly to deal with the more pressing problems of Germany and partly to allow the United States to take up the promises made by President Wilson. The war spirit that might have held the Allies together and enforced a clear-cut peace was dead, and after it had come disappointment at the result of the War. The reaction was in full swing and there was a determination among all classes to avoid at all costs any further use of force, to reduce the fighting services and the striking power of the Empire, to cut expenses and avoid all commitments.

For the minute the things of the spirit strove with the things of the world; but down the wind of the reaction, against the spiritual stimulus of the war, came a great boom in Materialism. For one minute on the 11th of November at the burial of the Unknown Warrior

the country saw vividly the tremendous price it had paid. For days the stream of mourners stretched many miles in every direction from Whitehall and these were but a small part of those who had suffered loss. The Great Empire remembered its agony and mourned its splendid youth destroyed, its vitality sapped and its prosperity in ruins. And then a priest in North London shouted openly the half-formed fear which had grown in every mind, that all this had been a waste, and a folly and a poor delusion. Great love, self-sacrifice and patriotism had inspired men to the great struggle. Now the rage of the nations, as they had flown at each other, seemed but a vulgar self-seeking brawl for trade and material advantages.

The temporary prosperity had a sense of unreality, and behind it was danger from Labour grown restive, even over-boisterous. There were foreign propaganda and "Red Flag" ideas. The ordinary British workman appeared sound and steady, but many of his leaders wished to rush him into revolution. The coal-miners struck on the 16th of October on such poor grounds, that it appeared that their leaders hoped to hurry them into "direct action." Two days later a demonstration of unemployed came to Downing Street, and the foreign element in the crowd turned it into a serious riot. I watched the original advance up Downing Street, and it was good-tempered. I went with the crowd as it looted in the Strand, and the men round me were the scum of the slums. They were foreign-bred Jews and the evil beasts of other countries who afflict Whitechapel with their presence, and they snarled and walked like

unkempt wild beasts. They were the foreign element of unrest that brought with it ideas of red revolution as catching and as deadly as the plague. The railways and the transport services threatened to strike. The ordinary worker had little interest in so doing. I visited many stations and talked with the men, and, as elsewhere, the extremists were forcing the pace, running them off their feet in the hope of a burst of revolution.

Ireland was a sheet of flame ; a trouble close, insistent, threatening and eating out the heart of and paralysing the Empire.

Suddenly in November without warning, almost as it were in a night, the prosperity of trade was gone. A severe slump set in, and trading concerns of all sorts went bankrupt in numbers.

Whitehall made a fitting setting for these events. One day it was a surging mass of angry, resentful rioters incited by foreigners. Within a month it was crowded with a vast, reverent concourse bareheaded, mourning the patriotic dead in a silence so profound that the sound of the pigeons on the arch of the National Gallery came clear and soothing. Within ten days it was full of unemployed, marching with crude banners, demanding work ; and within three weeks again it was full of the massed bands of the Guards as they brought home, with all the splendour of the Army, the nine officers murdered in Dublin. It illustrated the instability and the pressing problems at hand. It explained why the British Government had little time or energy for the Near East. The average man cared not at all what happened to Turkey, and those interested and affected

had not realized the birth of New Turkey nor that there was growing a Power able to resist the Allies.

But from various quarters the Turks found sympathizers. There were a number of experts and persons genuinely of the belief that, as a great Mohammedan power, it was our duty to be friendly to Turkey. With them were a mass of Indian officials and officers brought up in the traditions of the Punjaub and the Moslem element of the Indian Army and administrative services in India. With these stood Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India.

It was a curious anomaly that any Western Power should have had such a man in office. From the minute, in 1919, when he shepherded the Indian delegation before the Peace Conference, it was obvious that this was an Asiatic fighting for Asia against the European. In a stray minute I wandered down the main corridor of the India Office. Its walls are covered with the pictures of the Secretaries of State for India. There were there great men with great names. Their cast of face showed their breeding and their essential European character. Alone among them sneered down the photograph of Mr. Montagu, with a face Asiatic and Eastern.

He became the champion of the Khalifate and of the Turks as the protectors of the Khalif. He became the mouthpiece of the combine of Moslems and Hindus of India that used the bogey of Pan-Islam and the Khalifate for their own political ends. He spent much of his time pathetically complaining that no one would listen to him or pay attention to his warnings.

Over all Mr. Lloyd George rode rough-shod till Lord

Curzon and the Foreign Office came to a state of suspended animation, and Mr. Montagu and the India Office to that of suspended irritation.

Mr. Lloyd George had grown almost abnormal in his belief in and his respect for the Greeks. He was not *au courant* with the problems of the Near East. He had little knowledge of the value of its various peoples. As a politician much of his strength lay in the Non-conformist vote, and this was solidly against the Turks. He had behind him the tradition of Gladstone. He realized the vital importance of the Mediterranean as a high-road of the Empire and that both Italy and France desired to make it their own specially preserved lake. He saw that a Greater Greece was an aid to British policy. He had stumbled on the undoubted fact that for many a long day Greek and British interests in the Mediterranean must go hand in hand. It is said that he had also stumbled on to the knowledge that there had been an Ancient Greece with its great poets and philosophers and that this had inspired his Welsh soul. This may or may not be so, for, as M. Clemenceau once said, "I know that Mr. Lloyd George can read, but I do not know if he ever does."

Under the influence of the charm of M. Venizelos he saw in a brilliant picture a Greek Empire reviving in Europe and Anatolia the splendours of its ancestors, keeping open the Straits for Europe, holding back the Asiatic and infidel Turk, and maintaining the Mediterranean high-road for the British Empire. He recognized that if Greece should grow obstreperous, she was open to rapid punishment by a sea-power.

Without hesitation he had thrown in all his weight on the Greek side. He ignored the experts who warned him of failure and even M. Venizelos, who in late 1919 told him that Greece could not stand too great a strain. When the facts became obvious, he still refused to see them. The vision that he had seen was magnificent, but it was false in the most vital essentials. The Greeks did not possess the art of ruling. They had neither the ability nor the resources to carry out the great rôle assigned to them. Mr. Lloyd George chose a weapon that broke in his hand.

As a warning came three severe blows. As the result of a fantastic combination of incidents King Alexander died on the 25th of October, 1920, from the effects of the bite of a monkey. The Greeks recalled King Constantine and his German wife, and ejected M. Venizelos. The French had long since ceased to aid the Greeks and were actively helping the Turks. They seized this opportunity to repudiate officially their support of Greece.

The Bolsheviks defeated the armies of General Wrangel, and so chased out of Southern Russia the last of the anti-revolutionary forces. Mustapha Kemal and the Bolsheviks formed an alliance and portioned out Armenia between them.

The ejection of M. Venizelos from Greece and the defeat of General Wrangel were due to a common cause. In both cases the Allies had interfered in the private quarrels of other states, and by their interference ensured the success of their enemies and the failure of their protégés. They had not so much backed the

wrong horse as backed one horse, and automatically it had become the wrong one.

The ejection of M. Venizelos amazed many people, but it was supremely natural. The Greeks as a whole were fond of their king, and they had shown little desire to enter the Great War on the side of the Allies. Venizelos throughout 1916 fought for the Allies. He worked against his king and the general sentiment of the Greeks. He never understood the Greeks. They hated him, for he was a Cretan. On the 25th of June, 1917, he marched into Athens with a French force at his back and carried the country into the war. The allied victory gave him great prestige, but no popularity.

Throughout the next few years he was a dictator. The prisons were full of his political opponents. He was autocratic. He refused the Greeks the liberty to argue and talk politics, which, in Athens, meant that he was sitting on the safety-valve. In his republican ideas he was in opposition to the general sentiment, and his power rested on foreign bayonets, on foreign money and on the foreign influence which he had introduced into an internal quarrel. He was ejected, and, when he was called back in the hour of defeat, it was because the Greeks were convinced that without foreign help they were lost.

These events in Greece and the Turkish-Bolshevik alliance should have been somewhat of a warning, but they were ignored. It is a curious commentary on the rôle of a politician. The backing of M. Venizelos and Greece was a fatal error of judgment that involved great losses. Had a soldier or sailor made such an error, he

would have been relieved of his command, but Mr. Lloyd George continued to thrive.

Without grasping the realities or considering the potentialities of the position, steps were taken to put the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres into action, and I found myself detailed to assist in forming the necessary organization and plans. Commissions of all sorts, as in the treaty, were plotted out. Pay and equipment and their knotty details were argued over and laid down. From every direction came a rush of officers of all ranks looking for good jobs. The idea was abroad that Turkey was to be, as Egypt under Kitchener, a breeding-place for future field-m Marshals, under the rising young General, Sir Charles Harington. Generals and colonels and subalterns were fitted into the personnel of the Commissions. The Treasury advanced some money to be recovered in due course from the Turks. Handbooks and maps and diagrams were printed; and yet it was all empty paper-work and stupid vapouring. Without force the Treaty of Sèvres could not be carried out. The Allies were unable to employ force. The Greeks were incompetent and now unwilling to do their dirty work. England had ceased to think in World terms. She thought now in terms of England.

Having been transferred to General Head-Quarters Allied Forces of Occupation in Turkey, I proceeded with a party of officers early in January 1921, and we took with us all the carefully prepared instructions for the carrying out of the Treaty of Sèvres.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Greco-Turkish War. The First Greek Advance, 1921

**I** FOUND Constantinople changed but little. Inside it had been flooded by a new wave of refugees. The Bolsheviks had broken the lines dug across the Perekop Isthmus, chased Wrangel and his army out of the Crimea and taken Sevastopol. Wrangel's army with its wives and families and a host of refugees had crowded into ships and arrived off Constantinople on the 16th of November. For a while they had been forbidden to land, and, packed tight together, with no food, a prey to swift diseases, there they had lain at anchor a floating city of the dying. Then they had come ashore in tens of thousands and swamped and overcrowded the city, replete already with refugees of every nationality. To be a refugee had become a trade and a permanent profession.

Constantinople and the Allies were protected from harm and cut off from the rest of the world by a wall of Greek troops. On every side there were Greeks. They held all the Asiatic shore from the Black Sea to the Marmora and down past Chanak to the Mediterranean. In Europe they were down the Gallipoli Peninsula and

astride of Thrace. As I came in I was "vetted" by their controls. All letters and telegrams going out had to be handled by their censors.

In the streets of the city there were but few Turks to be seen, and their women either remained indoors or had gone to Anatolia with the men to help in the fight. The little sound news that came through showed that the Nationalists were working at top pressure, that they were acting with an unexpected vigour and efficiency, and that the chance of the Treaty of Sèvres being enforced, or of any settlement being made, was as distant as ever. On the 30th of January, 1921, Mustapha Kemal proclaimed that the Sublime Porte had ceased to rule, and that the Government of Turkey was now in Angora.

Despite these unfavourable circumstances, the preparations to put the Treaty of Sèvres into force were continued and the commissions prepared to get to work. Among other things the military authorities woke to the realization that in the Constantinople area there were enormous dumps of war material, and that even these had been neglected and poorly guarded.

I found myself detailed to this duty and set to work to photograph the depots and sites, and to count and catalogue the unholy jumble of stores, ammunition, rifles and guns of all sorts. It was obvious that there had been, and still was, extensive pillaging of all stores and ammunition of value. It was difficult to prevent it. All departments of the Constantinople Government were working full time to help Angora, and the Allied control but touched the fringe of their activities. The French authorities gave them all facilities to ship away

the war material. The guards on nearly all the depots were Turks, and so automatically Nationalists, and glad to help to get away munitions to fight the accursed Greeks.

In the great depot on the Golden Horn the matter reached a climax. With my Turkish colleague I put seals of wax, as used in Turkey, on the great iron doors, but invariably at the next visit the seals were gone. The guards were arrested. The junior officers were sent to jail. At last the senior in charge was to be tried. A commission for the Ministry of War could throw no light on the subject nor give any help.

In despair I replaced the seals and prepared to hide and watch for myself. The doors of the sheds looked on to a large yard stacked with shells for heavy guns and ammunition-waggons and much rubbish. It had grown thick with young grass and at the other side came down to a long quay on the Golden Horn. I reached my hiding-place with some difficulty. The sentries were more alert than I had expected. I stood to be shot if seen slinking about, or, worse still, made to look ridiculous. During the evening the sentries smoked and lounged and at sunset when they were changed, and while the muezzins were calling to prayer, half a dozen goats were shut into the yard. In the half-light I saw a ridiculous he-goat with a tufted beard deliberately walk up to the doors and eat off each of my seals in turn and then return to nibble grass. It is a strange country, this Turkey. As often in a club the wildest stories of the recognized liar are strictly and disconcertingly true, so here many a wild impossibility

is the fact. For myself, being thin-skinned, I held my peace and affixed seals, not of wax, but of lead, and indigestible.

Still, goats or no goats, wherever there was material of value, it was consistently removed and shipped away to Anatolia, and our allies assisted the Turks to avoid the controls. The agents employed by General Head-Quarters thrived on their reports on this gun-running. It was such an open secret and so easily come by, that they reported correctly and drew their pay in ease. They had long since combined into a close corporation and had quite an efficient staff for manufacturing and co-ordinating information, rarely correct but always saleable. From a dozen "independent" sources would come exact details of a plot or a raid and then the agents at General Head-Quarters who had invented the idea would be sent in hot haste to investigate. It was a whole new trade. It grew rapidly with wide ramifications and financial possibilities; for the Turks had paid their agents only by results.

My assistants on the depots were a few British and a number of Turks. Brain-power, education and, above all, imagination have much to do with fear, and as these Turks had little of the former they had likewise little fear. They smoked cigarettes placidly in powder factories. They dumped coal and shells and boxes of tri-nitro-toluene together, and then would break up a few old ammunition boxes and light a fire to cook and warm themselves in the lee of the dump, and this in a thickly populated suburb of the city where the houses were of wood. They handled without emotion explo-



GENDARMERIE BATTALION COMMANDER AND SECTION COMMANDERS  
ON CASTLE STEPS AT THE MOUTH OF THE BOSPHORUS

sives which should have been kept locked up and in water and which under the circumstances ought to have blown them sky-high. They dropped shells about, sometimes with their thin delicate German fuses set, and marched off solidly to get another load. They were disconcerting people with whom to work on a cold morning.

By May of 1921 this work was finished, and I proceeded to Chanak on intelligence duty. The situation in Anatolia had by now taken on a more ugly character. In February a conference of the Allies with the Turks and Greeks had been held in London. It had broken up in March without result. King Constantine was in a fix. Tactically the line he held, as the result of M. Venizelos' agreement with the Allies, was unsound. His own position needed a rousing victory, and Greece could not continue to stand indefinitely the strain of her adventure in Anatolia. No great distance ahead, and running across his front, was the Anatolian railway.

On the 23rd of March the Greeks advanced, with the intention of taking Afion-Kara-Hissar and Eski-Shehir, getting control of the railway and from there driving straight at Angora and so bringing the Turks to their knees and finishing the War. In this they received no support from the Allies. They were advised not to persist. They were not sufficiently prepared. The old war-tried officers of the Venizelist regime had been ejected for political reasons, and untried and often inefficient royalists had been put in their places. The Greeks failed to reach their first objective and in the middle of April they retired back to the old line.

Systematically, cruelly and under orders the Greeks

now set out to devastate, with the accompaniment of murder and rape of children and burning of houses, the Moslem villages within their control. They strained every nerve to prepare for a new offensive. They shipped over guns and food, and called fresh recruits and reservists to the colours. They refused all attempts at Allied mediation and pinned their hopes on a decisive military victory.

As a result, acting under orders from their Governments, the Allied High Commissioners, on the 15th of May, declared that there was now in existence a new Greco-Turkish War, and that in this they were strictly neutral. They declared that Constantinople and an area round it were to be treated as a neutral zone. They politely washed their hands of the Greeks, whom they had used, and left them and the Turks to fight out their own quarrel as they liked, provided that they kept out of the neutral zone and did not annoy them. The organized atrocities of the Greeks produced a natural reprisal, and the Turks set to work to wipe out all Greeks in the areas in their power.

Round Chanak these things showed themselves. Beyond the neutral zone were a sprinkling of regular Hellenic troops from Greece but the rest were the local Ottoman Greeks armed and formed into companies. They were inefficient, nervous and cowardly. In time of stress or strain they invariably failed the Hellenic troops. They intensified the bitterness of the conflict, for they were hideously cruel in committing atrocities, and they revenged themselves horribly on their Turkish neighbours. Their pent-up hatred of the centuries was

given free play ; and yet they were terrified of the Turks. In London and New York ladies and missionaries in drawing-rooms continued unwittingly to honour these foul monsters.

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One late May evening I came down the road that made the neutral frontier by the town of Bigha. There was news of a fight. From a hill-top in our area I could see a running battle in a valley close below me. The Greeks from Bigha had marched out to sack and burn a village, and, as they returned, the Turks from a village in the neutral area had slipped across and caught them. The Greeks broke at once. They had the terror of the Turk in them, and in twos and threes scattered and ran for home like rabbits. In the town of Bigha there was terror. Men in Greek uniform were taking cover behind any door or corner in fantastic fear. The streets were empty and the doors barred, except for a few old befezed Turks who sat by the cafés and drew placidly at their water-pipes. When I reached the Turkish village within our area, it was still and quiet. The courteous headman denied all knowledge of a fight and said that perhaps brigands were involved, but out of the corner of my eye I saw the men with their rifles slipping home between the houses. In the sacked village the mosque and the houses were in smoking ruins and flat with the ground and the corpses of little children and old men were in the ditches. It was a terrible war of massacre of neighbours. The area was all on edge, and as we went home down the road in

the dark I sang and whistled in cold fear, that nervous watchers should make no mistake as to who we were.

All this area, from here to Smyrna and all the seaboard, had in ancient days been a rich fertile land. It had supplied the corn and the minerals of the Ancient World and it had teemed with luxurious cities. Now it was empty, except for a few poor scattered villages. Touring I came at last to the village of Marmeris that lies on the headland above the Narrows, where the current is rapid and the Straits are but a mile broad.

It was the fast of Ramazan ; but the Circassian headman gave me good food cooked by his fasting servants and served by his younger brothers, as was his custom. To pass his long hungry day he took me down to the headland. We sat in an ancient graveyard where the tombs of slabs of stone stood out on every side. Down to us came the valleys and hills and on these had been the ancient city of 30,000 souls, with its streets and houses and baths. Once perhaps in a generation, he told me, a ploughman would find a diamond or a ruby dropped in the bygone centuries in the third valley, for there had been the street of the jewellers. Now the valleys were full of long grass and wild flowers and trees swaying in the sea breeze and the warm lazy sun. Over it all had come the blight of Ottoman rule. The sun and the fertile soil and the blue rich sea was the same, but on the shore below us were one stone house and twenty broken shanties which had replaced the great town. Continued misrule had destroyed it and Nature had in due course spread a fresh carpet over the scar. So was it with all this land.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Skutari and the Turkish Gendarmerie

THE Allied authorities in Constantinople were preparing to take some action on the Treaty of Sèvres. The officers detailed to the commissions had arrived and, having seen the sights of Stambul, were now impatient for work. The treaty was still in existence only on paper. Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Harington had taken over as the General Officer Commanding the Allied Forces of Occupation in Turkey; a title which though it had a fine sound was humorous and Gilbertian, for his jurisdiction ran over a handful of British troops and the few square miles of the neutral zone, and his "Allied Command" consisted in his right to try to persuade his unwilling French and Italian colleagues to act with him.

The Greeks were preparing for their second great offensive. They required every man. They were, moreover, not so trusting and amenable as in the days of Venizelos. They were unwilling to continue to do the dirty work of the Allies. Hitherto they had held the Ismidt Peninsula with the sole object of covering Constantinople and from here they now, by agreement with the Allies, began to withdraw. As they retired

they burned, without justification, the Moslem villages on their road.

They were replaced for the minute by a handful of British and Turkish cavalry to keep order, but a gendarme battalion was to be formed to take over the whole area, under the Constantinople Government, and this was to be supervised by British officers. I was recalled and posted to this battalion, with my head-quarters in the town of Skutari.

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From the pier at Beshik Tash, that lay below the Sultan's summer palace, I took a rowing boat to cross to Skutari. I left while the night mist still lay on the water and before the sun was up. The shores of the Bosphorus were lined with white villas and palaces and mosques and walled gardens, mostly in disrepair. They rarely repair in this country, but allow their houses to fall into ruins and then rebuild or abandon them. Strong solid houses, that will last from generation to generation, do not exist. For the Christians to build such would be folly, and only call attention to their wealth. Among the Moslems there is still the nomad instinct of their ancestors and the sentiment of the sage who said that life was but a cranky bridge and that the man who built a strong house on it and dreamt of it lasting was a fool and a scoffer against the Divine.

As we rowed, a school of black shining porpoises went gambolling and diving past us. A flight of strange birds, just skimming over the water, raced by. They are said never to settle, but to wander continuously up and down

looking for something, and to be the "souls of lost women." In these parts they are very numerous. On the marble terrace of a burnt-out palace fishermen were dragging in long brown nets and singing in chorus as they heaved together. From the south blew up the damp Lodost wind that threw the waters into little waves and turned the surface of the sea white.

We pulled up stream to round the Greek battleship, the *Avaroff*, which, with her sister ship the *Kilkis*, lay here at anchor. A sentry looked down at us placidly and I wondered that these ships should lie here in safety. The allies had declared this to be a neutral zone and these were neutral waters, and in all justice these combatant ships, engaged on active service, should not have been allowed here. In Pera was a Greek military mission, and a Greek hospital with an armed guard, and in the streets were Greek soldiers with rifles. Here, in the heart of the Turkish capital, Greek ships used the Bosphorus as their base and raided from here along the Black Sea coast and down the Marmora to bombard Turkish villages. The Italians and French had no sympathy with this, and the British point of view was indefensible.

But I wondered even more that the Turks had not made at least some attempt to sink the ships. With a little organization it would have been easy, for they were very vulnerable. While Turkey fought, gasping and struggling against heavy odds for life and existence, such a blow would have been as valuable as a great land victory. Yet not one attempt was made, and when the Turkish Chief of the Staff at the Admiralty

was asked why he had not tried, he sighed and said that the British would be angry.

I came to Skutari and landed at the little pier where the porters lounge and smoke. They looked like snails, for on their backs they carry always a leather hump, and a porter without a hump would be no porter. They are mostly Kurds and wild fierce men, godless and undisciplined. They are the instruments of every massacre and plot. Some politician had combined them into a corporation, and they were for ever being unruly and lawless. They growled and glared unpleasantly to see me come ashore, for they do not like Christians.

Skutari is quaint and old. Its streets are as steep as those of Pera, and twist up narrow, intricate passages where the roadway is of cobbles and the pavements are narrow and rain-water is shot off the roofs on to the passer-by. It is a town of twisting slums and then open spaces and parks, of large-sized hovels and tiny wooden shops where the shopman sits all day with a few bags of peas or a bundle of bed-coverlets, and appears to sell nothing, and yet contentedly at dusk puts up his wooden shutter and goes to the mosque to pray.

It was all Turk. Fires and troubles had routed out the few Christians who used to live there. It was a primitive, fanatical, antiquated place still living in the seventeenth century. In space it was but twenty minutes by boat from Europe. In the centuries it was 300 years away.

They gave me a house by a soft scented park where the women came to find their lovers. It looked away down the Marmora and over Stambul to Thrace. My

office was in the Government buildings, which had been started once on a fine design but never finished ; and even the finished bits now leaked in the rain, and let the wind in through gaps in the floors and windows.

The Governor was a nominee of the Sultan. He was a fat, lazy, flabby, nervous, incapable man who cared nothing for his work, was ashamed to talk Turkish with me, and stuck to his mongrel French, and was querulous and pathetic, because his pay was in arrears. He was typical of a great change. When Mustapha Kemal set out in 1919 on his adventure he was a rebel. Now the Sultan was of little value and the men who remained with him were flabby inefficients such as this man. All good Turks had long since gone to Angora. This Governor was kept in place, because the British General had found him submissive and had requested the High Commission to see that he was retained. The British still obstinately buried their heads in the sand, and refused to see the new power that was growing in Anatolia.

For me it was a new life. In Turkey, whatever one does, politics creep in. The fall of a Grand Vizier means a change right down all the ranks to the woman who cleans the office of the clerks in some obscure district. Still, as the day's work, politics ceased for me. They but added the salt of interest to a life of adventure. As a soldier I was almost free of restraint, for I was alone and there were no regulations to cover each action.

I lived with the Turks, not now as a subordinate or prisoner nor on the lofty eminence of an Embassy,

but as an equal. I saw with their eyes and heard with their ears and lived their lives. I looked back at my own people from a new position, and I experienced some disappointment. It was as when one has lived long in trenches and they have come to be something large and spacious, and suddenly one sees from a sap-head, that they are to the enemy no more than cheap mounds such as rabbits scratch.

I had watched British life in India. Within it was a dusty edition of suburbia and externally it was like isolated islands in seas of teeming native life. So here in Turkey the British were isolated. They never knew the people nor their ideas nor their ways. They adopted a superior air of patronage and sneered and, if possible, kicked all those who wore fezes. They were ignorant of the most rudimentary facts, and whoever tried to learn these was looked on as a lost man and "gone native." Their superiority did not seem so obvious from outside. In official life they suffered from the acute modern disease of "paper." They waded into paper caring little for live personalities or live facts, but trusted in written words and reports. They submerged themselves in paper till lost beneath it. If they then saw a fact, it was as distorted as the moon through water to a diver in the sea.

There were eight British gendarmerie supervising officers with separate areas, and I was given half the Ismidt Peninsula with some 600 square miles in all. We were given a chance to see Turkish official life from within, as no Englishman had seen it before. I quickly found that the Turkish and the British officials

viewed their positions from different angles. In the East an official position is an acquisition to be used. It means money and comfort and the sitting under green trees and the people to be used as servants. Even if only temporary, it is a thing to be enjoyed and to be turned to profit. To the British it means a responsibility. Inspired by this and the sense of power and the instinct to organize and control the affairs of others, they will put away the good things of life and its comfort. They will sit long hours on office-stools in some dingy hole. White with fever, they will work through torrid heat in deserts beyond civilization. The two conceptions are poles apart, and as widely different as the characters of Turk and British.

I found my area in a sad state. Politics and war had torn it into pieces. At the Armistice the British had come and brought with them the ideas of the liberation of Christian minorities. The local Christians believing in these had rallied to them and been freely used. As the British had withdrawn, the Nationalist Turks had overrun the area and taken revenge on the Christians, and then the Hellenic Greeks had come and the Ottoman Greeks had taken even more brutal revenge. Now the hills were full of brigands and criminals and the villages lay depopulated and many burnt, and, even from within the towns, the brigands carried off the merchants and held them to ransom. Between the Christians and the Moslems was a great gulf of murder and incendiarism and rape and bloodshed.

! We set to work under considerable difficulties. ! The

British authorities viewed the experiment with suspicion. There was little sign of pay or equipment being supplied. All good men had gone to Anatolia and the recruits who came in were a few old gendarmes and a weedy set of loafers of little value. Until we had received a few refugees and some prisoners-of-war back from Egypt we were not able to get to work.

Gradually we got on to our feet. It was a life full of tremendous fun. I loved each minute of it. There was the sifting of evidence and the making of plans and cunning devices to outwit the criminals. There was the detective work in the twisted streets of ancient towns and the long marches under the open night sky, as I watched the stars sweep up and over the heavens and die under the sunrise. There was the hunting on horseback of brigands, a hunting that makes tame the chasing of the fox. There was the spice of danger and the urge of power, and there was independence that gave a taste to life.

I worked alone without interpreters, for I hated them all, as individuals and as a class. I twitched at their pidgin English, and the airs that they gave themselves and their eastern foreign faces looking out under British military caps. I found them at the bottom of every misunderstanding. I hated them because they used our good name to their profit and because they befouled our honour. I preferred to struggle on alone.

For the minute the brigands reigned. They had little fear of capture by the British cavalry which had been sent to replace the Greeks until we were ready. They even became hilarious at the attempts of the men on

great English horses or in heavy crashing boots, who pursued them through the woods, as they slid silently forward on their skin shoes. As well expect a buffalo to tread on a dog. They would arrange with the intelligence agents and come and talk and drink with their innocent pursuers, who without knowledge of the language, customs or the land were as men blind. And so they had grown over-confident and insolent.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Brigand Hunting : The Capture of Yanni

EACH week came news of robberies and murder and villages raided and men held to ransom, but we could do nothing, for we were not ready. The authorities grew impatient, and when news came of a raid on the Jewish settlement village of Yahoudi Chiflik on the last day of July, we decided to declare war on the brigands, though we were but half prepared.

Of exact details of the raid we had none. The small boy who came secretly with the news could not say who sent him. Before dawn on the 1st of August we set out to investigate. The smell of heat lay heavy in the air and the house was still grey with the shadow of night as I came down my rickety stairs. From the Yeni Mosque by the pier the muezzin was calling to prayer.

A golden quarter of the moon, half toppling out of the sky, was sinking low over Stambul. For a minute it threw the minarets and mosques into black relief against a sky of fathomless blue and then dipped into the grey morning mist. We looked down on the park with its tiny ponds and dilapidated bandstand to the Golden Horn, where they were closing Galata Bridge. The

first movements of the waking city came up like the live murmur of a distant sea. In the gardens a bird fluffed its feathers and called. A cool breeze brought up the scent of flowers. The flies were moving lazily and the horses fidgeted and champed on their bits as we swung into the saddle.

We clattered out over the cobbled streets with my mare leading, and behind her fifteen squeaking excited stallions who kicked and plunged. We twisted up the narrow alley-ways, roofed over with crossed vines and filled with the smoke from newly lighted charcoal braziers, and between the tiny shanties of shops, until we came to the great cemetery of Skutari. We picked our way between jumbled ruins of headstones set at all angles, and over patches of vivid green grass, where black rocks bulged out here and there. We rode under the cypress trees whose trunks were white and their shadows jet black in the grey light before dawn. They made the silence even more silent and the dreariness of the graves more dreary. Here the Moslem faithful are buried twenty deep and close by the road they lie deeper—for even when dead, men dread to be forgotten. There was neglect and ruin. It was all cold and ragged and as mouldy as Death. A raven croaked. The pariah dogs were rummaging among the bones and snarling at each other. Waiting for death that comes to them but slowly, the lepers crept among the graves.

We came out to Kizikli and the hills of Chamlidje, full of gardens and flowers and white chatelets, where the Pashas live when the summer grows dusty. I smelt the good heather. A spring of clear water came gurgling,

kicking and bubbling from the hill-side, and its laughter was full of life clean, fresh and pure.

Beyond that we rode into great rolling plains as the sun began to glow hot and fiery over the Anatolian mountains and the snows on Olympus turned rose at the touch of day. The moving breeze kicked up light clouds of purple dust behind the first wood carts. The carters called to their animals and urged them forward and salaamed to us with a hang-dog manner that seemed to me to be that of guilty men until I learnt that it was fear that was in their eyes. We followed the dusty road, where my mare stumbled in the holes and ruts, and across the barren hill ; and so at last towards evening we came to the Village of Jews.

That there had been a raid and that they had been robbed and beaten, there was no doubt. There was a young woman with her arms and breasts like red steps, where she had been beaten with the sharp edge of knives. But no word of evidence could we get. The people were craven and afraid. At last they pushed forward one evil, dirty brute, who had been a camp follower in South Africa. His English was a running stream of filthy oaths and indecencies, but he dared talk because no one understood him ; and from him I learnt that among the brigands was one Yanni, the son-in-law of Christo, a householder in the Greek village of Bakal Keuy.

We halted for the night and bit by bit from hints and whispers we learned that it was the renowned band of Greeks under the brigands Zaffiri, Pavli and Karoglan who had made the raid. That was a night of torment. No slum in the East have I ever found so foul as this



LEFT TO RIGHT: TWO GENDARMES, AN ARMENIAN VILLAGE  
GUARD, AND TWO HEADMEN OF LAZZ VILLAGES, IN ALEMDAR  
FOREST



village of Russian Jews. The myriad flies, that by the day covered the ceilings and walls crawled over the food and fed at the sore lids of the children's eyes, crept even in the dark and buzzed at each move I made. The offal had for years been thrown out of the windows and doors and there it lay to stink in clotted filth, till it had fouled all the air and the water too. From every crack and mattress a thousand hungry parasites appeared.

We were away before dawn had shown in the east and so came to Bakal Keuy, which was a village of Ottoman Greeks. We sat under a great lime tree. In front of us was the church and the village square and behind us the little shop to which the men came to drink their morning coffee. While we talked we ate a luxurious breakfast of fresh eggs in oil mixed with tail fat and bread and bitter cheese. The head man and the elders and a queer little old priest sat round us. They were quiet, hospitable, courteous folk, but they denied all knowledge of Yanni or of any brigands at all and said that all was well. And yet I knew that last month the village had been raided and a man killed.

I was at a loss. I could not bridge the gap. As I begged them for news a well-set-up sturdy man in a neat blue suit with a reefer coat strolled leisurely from the little café and sat down with us. He had an easy air of bravado. He talked boldly as one who had been in authority. His truculence angered me, and suddenly drawing a bow at a venture I covered him with my revolver and arrested him. The gendarmes took him away to cross-question him in their own terrible way, and so brought back news that this was Anastas a member

of the band, a well-known robber who had been arrested last year by the British and had broken prison, and that Yanni had left that morning to hide in the hills above the village of Kurt Dogmush.

While they saddled the horses, I turned in a fury on the elders. They sat silent and ashamed, until the priest who had been a refugee from Russia to Anatolia, and from there in turn had fled before the Nationalists, plucked up courage and said:

"Effendi, I too lied and would lie again. You come for a day and are gone. The government changes often; but the brigands are always with us."

Suddenly, as in a flash of light in the dark, I saw it standing out clear and insistent—the dreadful fear that dominated their lives. Wherever I travelled, I saw stark fear. Fear lay in the eyes of every man in this country. It was a dull silent fear that would not set a man running, but the terror of waiting for a blow from a blind side. The people were afraid of the brigands who raided them and cut them with knives if they did not pay. They were afraid of the gendarmes and police who beat them and imprisoned them. They were afraid of their neighbours. Greek and Armenian watched Turk, and Turk watched Greek and Armenian. No man knew what political changes or what new evil to-morrow might bring, and the people waited on tip-toe.

We hurried out of the shade into the burning sun at a canter in hot pursuit, and the dust came up in a great cloud behind us as each stallion bucked and strained to be near my mare. We hurried across the empty

country over steep stone hills and across dry river beds where the heat played in long shivering waves. Suddenly as we topped a rise below us, half a mile away, we saw a man swinging along, and, in defiance of the law, across his back he carried a rifle. The sound of his noisy singing came up to us, and then he turned and saw us and ran for the hills and the low scrub forest above, in which we could not follow him on horses. Without a word, at full gallop we set at him. Helter-skelter without formation or plan we raced hell-for-leather over the holes and gullies, scrambled down the steep hills, tore along a level bit on soft earth where the mare gamely took a jump that left the gendarmes for the minute behind. In front, with the fear of real death close on him, twisting and making use of every narrow way, ran our quarry. Up a narrow gully he raced where the mare failed to get her footing and the gendarmes' ponies scrambled by her; and they were on the man before he could unsling his rifle. Faithfully at my heel was Hadji Ramazan, my sergeant, not because he wished to be, but because his stallion had decided to stay with my desirable mare. He had squealed at the whip and kicked at the spur, but stuck obstinately beside her; and she, being no slut, now planted her heels into his ribs as a warning.

Sidki the Liar brought the man to me with pride. It was no doubt that this was Yanni, the son-in-law of Christo, and quickly they covered him with a cloak and hid his face that no one should know whom we had caught. It was Sidki the Liar, a typical sharp town-bred Turk, born of an Armenian mother and brought

up in the covered bazaar of Stambul behind the Ministry of War, who had thought of this precaution. Now with his dark restless eyes he looked for applause, set his fez at a rakish angle over his hair, which he kept over-long, and began to expatiate on his success as a brigand-hunter. Then, looking at himself in a pocket mirror, he gave his moustache an extra fierce upward twist, and, with his spurs jingling on the heels of his well-polished riding boots, he strode off with a taking air of bravado. Sidki, though quite irreligious, had an immense contempt for Christians. He used them to supplement his pay with bribes. Sometimes, at a fee, he helped them to run contraband tobacco. He was a vain man, a lover of show, a fluent and inefficient liar, and he stole my horses' corn.

We rode on rapidly to the village of Kurt Dogmush and there Halil Fehmi Effendi, as soon as he heard that we had come, sent his grooms, who held our stirrups, while we dismounted and took the horses to the stables. Fehmi Effendi owned the village and the fields for many miles round and flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and he lived, as his fathers had lived before him, as a squire with a liberal hand. He met us at his door. He killed a sheep, and his wives basted it and stuffed it with rice and nuts and spices that made a hunger-inciting mess. His retainers brought it in, and Fehmi pulled back his sleeve, while we squatted expectant round the low brass table set on the floor, and then he shredded off sufficient of the well-cooked meat, and sent the rest out to the gendarmes.

The meal was no sluggish affair, wherein conversation

and food pass a pleasant hour. Dish followed dish rapidly and was eaten quickly and in silence, except for suctional sounds as of many vacuum cleaners. There were eggs in oil and boiled chickens and cheese and salads and honey and long slabs of hot bread and many other dishes. Then they brought us water in a ewer and towels to wash our hands and we rubbed our teeth clean with the fingers. Replete to stupefaction I crawled back on to the settee that ran round the walls, stretched myself with caution, and, lying back at a rajah's ease, allowed a servant to hand and light me a cigarette.

We were late away and we took a horse from the village to bring Yanni, but we travelled fast, for the horses had been fed on good barley and were hard to hold. Somewhere the men had found a Turkish woman's clothes, and now Yanni was veiled and covered in great shapeless folds of coarse black cloth. I called him *Fatmeh Hanum*, and even old Hadji Ramazan, the sergeant in charge of the mounted gendarmes, though the joke was not over-much to his liking, wrinkled up his stern weather-beaten face and smiled.

"Hadji," I called, as he cursed Yanni and flicked the village pony to keep him up. He drove his rough stallion up beside me and, with his chin set square, his mouth firm, and his eyes deep dark and steady, he waited for what I should say.

"Hadji! are you not ashamed to talk with a strange woman like this *Fatmeh Hanum*?"

"Effendi," he replied in his dignified stately way, "this is no hussy, for she keeps her face covered"; and all down the line of gendarmes ran a ripple of laughter.

The moon was up, round and clear, as we came to the pass that runs between the twin breasts of the mountains of Çakal Dagħ. The mountain path ran steep and narrow in the shadow where the hills towered up on the right and to the left dropped sheer two hundred feet or more into a gorge. As the leading gendarmes crossed the crest out into the white light a volley of rifle shots ran out and the bullets came with a murderous thud into the cliff-side. I saw the men fall. Their horses turned and galloped back on us. There was confusion and noise and the sound of men running and vague figures and quick panic and contagious fear.

I crept forward in the black shadow, while Hadji held my mare. Beyond me in the light one gendarme stirred a little and groaned. Across the narrow gorge, with its unclimbable precipitous sides, came voices talking and a woman's laugh, shrill and vulgar. Then in the coarse accent of the Ottoman Greek, that rasps all the soft music out of Turkish, she called filth and abuse on the Turks and bade the gendarmes go home, for now the English ruled in Turkey and the Greeks were free. And I in my broken Turkish called back and cried that I was the English captain, and her men bade her be quiet. As I dared out into the white light in my "topee" I heard the rolling of stones and whisperings as they crept away, and far down below me a stream laughed and played with itself in the loneliness of the rocks.

We collected the men, and Yanni, hidden in his disguise, shivered with fear lest his Greek friends should find him, and so we came to the great forest of Alemdar.

I lodged in the empty summer palace of one of the Whittalls, who were Englishmen and the merchant princes of Turkey and had grown so great and so numerous that, as it was said, "They were a family that had narrowly avoided becoming a nation."

I could not sleep. I got up and walked out in the light of the great moon. The forest lay quiet. Now and again a hidden wind would sigh through the trees and carry up an unknown scent that was a lure. Far away a jackal called. Without warning a nightingale close at hand caught its breath and burst into liquid song, and a dozen more in the forest answered, and from pools a thousand frogs woke the night and the tree crickets called on twenty different notes. Then they died to sleep and left the forest quiet except for the but half-heard ground noises, and the wonder of the night was supreme.

I walked a little way. From a house where the gendarmes slept came the sound of steady blows, not fierce or cruel but steady and methodical and brutal. They were beating Yanni, as they beat all prisoners for information, and his tormented gasps came sighing and droning across the still night like the winter's wind round an old house. My hair stiffened in sudden anger. And then I remembered the woman of the Village of Jews with her arms a red staircase of wounds and the gendarme as he stirred on the head of the pass and groaned in agony; and I went home to sleep.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Brigand Hunting : The Raid on Bakal Keuy

FROM the information obtained from Yanni it seemed probable that the band would sleep the next night at Bakal Keuy, for it was their habit to follow for safety close on the heels of their pursuers. So we rested that day in the cool of the forest, and sent word for one hundred and fifty infantry to march from Skutari and meet us on the road at an old post house.

Alemdar was a mixed village, in which Armenians predominated. The villagers had long since taken all their valuables and furniture to the towns and were ready to fly for safety at any minute. Some of them had been given rifles to protect themselves, and these were led by one Dipovan, a drunken, useless, swashbuckling liar of a fellow, who was afraid of his own shadow, if he wore a fez. He was the official agent of the British military authorities. He was an Armenian, and an evil-looking, small, vicious brute with red bloodshot eyes, who interfered with the wives of his neighbours. He gave evidence against Moslem brigands, of whom he was in terror, and worked hand in glove with the Christian criminals. As they relied on dishonest interpreters, so the British military authorities trusted in, gave power

to and subsidized such evil beasts as Dipovan ; and so they besmirched our good name.

The villagers desired to feast us, and we walked through the deep forest of fine beeches and oaks, straight and slim and seventy foot high, until we came to a spring that had cut its way through black rocks down in a shady valley. Some sultan had built it up with marble, making a basin and calling it Tash Delen or the "Rock Cutter." The water-carriers came to it to draw the exquisite water and sold it in the thirsty streets of Stambul.

There we lay in the shade on beds of leaves, with the peasants ranged round us. Many of the types of the Ottoman peasantry were there. There was the Headman, a great heavy dark Armenian, with a hoarse laugh and a mouth full of black teeth, brutal faced and boisterous. He had been chief huntsman to Sultan Abdul Hamid. His lean, rat-faced brother, who made bread and sold groceries at a good profit in the village, was there. They were both great drinkers of alcohol. There were Greek and Armenian women, with their husbands, chattering like starlings and wearing yards of pleated bloomer trousers, little waistcoats over their blouses and coloured handkerchiefs tied round their masses of glorious hair. Many of them were good-looking women, but they grow old and ugly quickly. Spring here is short, and then comes summer with its burning suns that patches the land and air ; and in such a climate women and flowers alike grow quickly, come to their prime early, and then shrivel and pass.

There were Turks with great belts round their middles

full of pockets and layers in which they carried all their trifles. On one side sat the Lazzes, blue-eyed, light-haired men from the south coast of the Black Sea, where it comes full in the force of the gales from the Crimea. They talked in a sing-song, melodious and droning, each sentence drawn out into an "Oh!" and then carried forward to the next. They were good sturdy stuff, these peasants. The land, the air and the water were good; and yet a gang of half-caste Levantine rulers away in Stambul had ruined all. They had murdered the industrious Greek and Armenian and poured out to waste the results of his labour. They had decimated the lazy, lovable Turks.

Already the sun threw long shadows through the trees. Below the spring, a nightingale, unable to wait for night, burst into song. Far away a jackal cried, and red-legged partridges called to each other on the hills. The people were excited and full of good cheer and singing. For a few hours the dread fear was off them, and they were safe and might walk and sleep in safety because my escort and I were there.

We crept away silently that night and across the hills, till we came to the rendezvous. Yanni, still dressed as a woman, was to be our guide and we followed his plans. With heather to our waists, we staggered across the open country, where my mare stumbled and slipped and snorted and blew with fear at the steep hills. The pale moon threw a faint purple mist across the world. It died to a circle of soft white in the early grey of dawn, as we came to the village. Yanni showed a genius for this work, and, as dawn crept up the sky, I saw that



GREEK VILLAGERS SUSPECTED OF BRIGANDAGE OUTSIDE A  
TYPICAL VILLAGE HOUSE



we were all round the village and every gully and exit that might lead up to it was closed with gendarmes.

We sat and waited for the light. I left the horses in the valley and climbed a hill to watch. Suddenly outside our ring I saw a man creeping through a field of maize and then another and yet another. Then they burst into full view running hard. I blew the alarm. The orders were to catch and, if possible, not to kill. In a garden below the horses were being fed. Before they were bridled up the men were 500 yards away among the gullies at the foot of the great mountain of Keish Dagħ that leans over the village. Then came the gendarmes riding hard and firing from the saddle as they rode, and every gendarme on the hills let fly and the air was full of the crack and drone of bullets.

Sidki was leading on his white stallion. With my glasses I saw the men separate. Two ran up the hills and one come doubling back down a gully, and as he passed he fired at Sidki and man and horse went down, with the horse hit. After him came Ali and Hussein. The horses and the man ran neck and neck. The man with great strides and slipping between the boulders, round which the horses had to detour, running at an incredible pace, drew away. I caught up a rifle and raced to intercept him. My heavy field boots weighed like lead. For a second I saw him clearly and then he was hidden in a ravine; and as he went over the skyline a quarter of a mile away I fired and saw the dust kick up beside him, and he was gone.

It was Karaoglan, an immense gorilla of a man with long arms and a tremendous chest and dark and hand-

some to look at. Months later he quarrelled with his mistress and she betrayed him to us.

The gendarmes had caught the other two runners. They were Christo and Nikola, members of the band. We combed out the houses one by one, and found a rifle or two, and three more brigands. I talked to the headman. He threw out his hands in despair, and I thought that I understood his position ; but in the next month the Greeks discovered that Yanni was our helper, and they boycotted and starved his wife and children, till they became outcasts, and Yanni, who had been released, disappeared and could not be found. All the evidence showed that this headman and the little priest had instigated the villagers to murder him.

Satisfied with our captures, we made a permanent gendarme post in the village—and this at the request of the headman and elders—and prepared to take the road home. I waited impatiently for the horses to come. As they did not appear I walked down to their stables. From a distance I heard the voices of Sidki and Hadji raised in high argument. Behind the stable I found a crowd and Hadji's stallion, which had a neck as thick as its girth, rolling in the agony of colic. As they watched, one would call "Allah! Allah!" and the crowd would draw breath through their teeth as they sighed. Sidki wished to dose the horse with brandy, but Hadji held that it was forbidden and accursed, and he quoted the Holy Laws to give force to his views ; for though he could not read or write the old man knew by heart great pieces of the Koran and the *Sheriat*.

"Hadji," I called, and he came to me, dignified and

courteous. He was an Arab born in Bagdad and a devout Moslem, who neither drank alcohol nor smoked, kept strictly the fast of Ramazan, and had twice, as a poor pilgrim, done the *Haj* to Mecca.

"Hadji, will you give him this?" I asked, offering him a horse-pill. But he was still hot from his argument, and his gnarled swarthy face was fierce with the fanaticism in him, that would carry him to murder.

"No, no, Effendi, I know not what is in it. There may be in it wine or pig-flesh," he replied.

"But Hadji," I asked, "if the doctors order it, would you not yourself take medicine?"

"The doctors," he flared up, "they are neither *sheik* nor *hodja*. They read *French-Mench* and then talk fon ! fon ! fon ! and fon ! again ! I know the medicines of the Koran, which are all-sufficing."

Days later Hadji had a headache. It was so severe that he swayed in the saddle half blind as he rode. All his pride and self-sufficiency, as a follower of the Prophet, was gone. At the night-halt he took my aspirin, and was comforted, and henceforth carried a few tabloids in a slip of paper. He was a good, faithful old man, for, though he was months in arrears of pay and his coat was all patches and his trousers threadbare and his toes came through his riding-boots, he would neither steal nor take bribes and he obeyed orders quietly and doggedly and implicitly, and told no lies.

They were nothing but great foolish children, these gendarmes of mine. They were thoughtless, illogical, happy and as lovable as children, and as cruel ; except for here and there some town-bred rascal like Sidki.

We took the steep path that runs over the mountain of Keish Dagh and clambered up between the stones, until we came close below the crest. Here it is believed that the priests at the coming of the Turks hid the church-plate that they had collected, and over it rolled a great stone.

We halted for a breather, and to look at the tremendous view. Beneath us the valleys full of ripening corn twisted down between the scarred hills—hills covered with heather and scrub and rock and the dead asphodel flowers. For the rest, it was rolling waste and granite hills with great red wounds across their sides and their tops standing out ragged, like stale bread torn; or perhaps it was the place where the moon was rent away from the earth. Valleys and hills dropped down to the sea-shore, and the plain lay spread out like a map with white roads and squared fields. As far as the eye could see the shore was fringed with white villages and red-roofed houses and gardens rich with trees—villages and gardens built by Christians and inhabited by Christians who crowded on to the shore for protection against the wildness of the interior. Far away to the north was the Alemdar forest and the distant glint of the Black Sea. The Bosphorus wound down, a blue streak between steep hills. Pera and Stambul stretched away into the haze of the Thracian plains. The Marmora was deep and blue, as far away as the Dardanelles and back past us round the islands of the Princes and up to Ismidt. While beyond it the mountains of Anatolia towered into the blue sky, now pale with heat.

And so we clambered down the steep path through

the fortified lines and barbed wire that the British had made to defend Constantinople before the Greeks came, and in the shadow of evening, at the hour of evening prayer, we clattered into Skutari.

## CHAPTER XX

### As a Gendarme Supervising Officer

**W**EEK after week I travelled on horseback up and down the country from the placid blue Marmora to the troublesome Black Sea. I, like the other gendarmerie control officers in their own areas, was following the instinct of our ancestors. We were given certain limited powers to supervise the gendarmes and to prevent malpractices. Very rapidly we made for ourselves administrative powers. We guided the collection of taxes. We saw to the administration of justice and the work of the forest guardians and the headmen of the villages. We built the roads and helped the people. It was a leap back to the instinct of the great administrators in India and all across the East, who had built new structures from ancient ruins, who had brought justice and peace to where there had been only injustice and brutality, and who had persuaded once fertile lands, which had become deserts, to produce again corn and food. This they had done by superimposing over the local administrations European ideas, European ideals and European control.

In our small areas we succeeded. As we destroyed the brigandage, the villagers gained confidence and

returned to till their fields. It was impossible to reach all the abuses in the administration of justice, but we broke down the gross injustices. Fear ceased to be the dominant attitude and order came slowly back out from disorder. We were doing in our small areas what the Treaty of Sèvres, if it could be enforced, planned to do for all Anatolia.

But it was a leap back to an old system. The Great War that had been fought to end all wars, and the Great Peace that had been signed to end all peace, had made the system archaic. England had lost, as well as her strength, her instinct to rule. It had belonged to one class that, poor but well educated, had filled the army and navy and the civil services. It was the class that had made and ruled the Empire, and it had been the schoolmaster as well as the ruler of the East. It was gone, killed by the Great War and crushed out by economic conditions. Neither the rich nor the titled aristocrats nor Labour had this instinct nor the inspiration, and England cared no more for these things. In the East was a revolt against Europe and its dominance and its persistent assumption of superiority. Based on the treaty of August 1919, the old system was tried in Persia. It was the foundation of the administration of Irak. It was the keynote of the Treaty of Sèvres. One by one each was swept into the dust-bin as rubbish and dried meatless bones. Our work marked the final trial and the passing of the old system and the refusal of the Asiatic to accept good government at the hands of European schoolmasters.

Gradually the gendarmes destroyed the brigand bands

and made the villages and roads safe. The small and irregular bands were rapidly eliminated, but those that were large and permanent were difficult to lay by the heels. The eggs, from which they had hatched, had been laid in the unpleasant manure heap of local politics and Greek helped Greek and Turk helped Turk. To the north was a Moslem band under one Tahir the Lazz who had taken to the hills to fight the Greek troops and so had gained the halo of a patriot. To the south, where the Greek villages abounded, Zaffiri and Pavli and Karaoglan still roamed the country-side and made spasmodic raids, and then went to ground among their Greek friends.

I lived close with the people and I began to realize how they looked on us. The Christians had been roused by the promises of the Allied leaders at the Armistice, and still failed to understand that these were not to be fulfilled.

The Turks without exception hated us. They are a proud people, and were prouder than ever in defeat. The British air of superiority drove them to fury, but, forced to keep it pent up, they raged inwardly, and their hatred became as full of bitter poison as an unlanced boil. They were incommunicative people with no power of self-expression nor of propaganda in their own interests, and British officials failed to realize that they were a ruling people and not Hindus or negroes to be treated as subjects. It was only a few years since they had possessed a great empire.

"It may be," said one during an argument, "that the British make one prosperous, but they do not respect one's dignity," and he spat expressively.

The stupidity of many senior officers would have been amusing, if it had not been tragic. One Colonel came inspecting and grew very savage and caustic, because the gendarmes had not spotless buttons on their tattered uniforms. In the course of one day he tried to tell some excellent troops that he would not be ashamed to command them, and explained nicely to the Governor that he fully realized that his pay was in arrears and therefore he recognized that he and his staff, like all Turkish officials, had to be dishonest. He treated the headmen of the villages as if they were his grooms, and he treated his grooms like dogs. And this Colonel was no exception among senior officers. It is a vast pity that each regiment, like kings in the olden days, has no professional fool who might by his frank irony force senior officers to keep a sense of the value of their own importance and their own unimportance.

As I lived on friendly terms with them, the Turks allowed me the doubtful privilege of seeing behind their minds. I heard the scurrilous things they said and believed of our women. They disliked our methods. They did not believe in either our intentions or our promises. As they go through life with closed eyes, so here the British officials imagined that if they brought riches and peace and justice to the people they would be beloved. They never realized the outstanding fact that the people of Turkey, as those of Irak and Persia, prefer the most scandalous Moslem government to the very best that is foreign and Christian.

## §

"We have worked enough," said Husein Husni, the Captain and the senior officer in my area. "Let us amuse ourselves to-night. Hilmi the Advocate will lend us his house. I have persuaded Blanche the Dancer to come and a man has gone to hire a dozen of the Sultan's best players from the palace band."

Husein Husni was a good companion for amusement. Fat, so that except on state occasions the high collar of his uniform and his belt had to stand open, with rough tumbled hair and his fez stuck well back on his head, he had that quality so often possessed by little fat men that wheresoever he went the air became full of rib-tickling laughter. The tales of his frequent amours were the jests of the town, and, when his name was mentioned, even the dullest crowd began to laugh and be gay.

Yet to judge Husein Husni as a fat and pleasant philanderer would be unjust. He hated the routine of office life, but at the first news of brigands he was up and out with a gun across his shoulders and skin shoes to replace his everyday foppish French-cut boots. Away over the hills he would outwalk the youngest. He had a flair for catching brigands and criminals. He was a born leader, able to get willing work out of unpaid men. He took no bribes and was as proud as Lucifer.

After nightfall we drove in a broken-down carriage to the little house that stood in a concealed square looking on to a courtyard of an old mosque. With us came the new Governor of the district, Sami Bey, faultlessly dressed in the full regalia of an Ottoman high

official with frock-coat, patent-leather shoes and new red fez complete. He belonged to the new order, was a Nationalist by sentiment, had been a deputy in the Parliament, a governor of a province under the Angora administration, quarrelled with Mustapha Kemal and come to Constantinople for safety. He had the drive of a Manchester business man, working long hours and making his decisions quickly. He had reorganized the district, harried the lazy officials who had slouched along under the flabby old toad who had been the Sultan's nominee, and he was rapidly producing order and prosperity. He belied nearly all the current conceptions of an Ottoman official.

Hilmi the advocate—"advocate" was a euphemism for general odd-job dirty-work agent—opened the door to us with deep humility and we trooped across the stone kitchen, up the stairs and into a large room. Along one wall and across the windows was a cushioned settee. There were straight-backed chairs and little tables set with small glasses and bottles of *rakhi*, a heady edition of absinthe flavoured with aniseed, and with them plates of dried fish, and olives and beans and many *hors d'œuvres* in oil. The walls were bare and white-washed. The musicians trooped in and salaamed and squatted by the wall. We smoked and drank and nibbled at the "*mezzars*," as the Turks call these *hors d'œuvres*, until suddenly without warning a musician struck up, and the rest joined in or left off as they felt inclined.

Weird sounds were piled on weird sounds that seem to a western ear to be neither tones nor semi-tones nor yet quarter-tones, but to fail to catch any note. The

hand drums beat incessantly. The clarinets squealed like bagpipes and the violins were scraped and sawed not in the melody but as a vamp accompaniment. Then one and then another of the singers would burst into the agony of an ear-splitting wail, hang on to a note till he would appear to be near suffocation, and then with a quaver and a run strike another and so gradually strain his way through the hundred verses of some passionate love song.

Guests slipped in respectfully and salaamed and took seats. Among them came a wizened old merchant who owned a dozen grocer shops and was rich. He was so stupidly enamoured of Blanche that he pursued her continually and she bled the old fool of his money. A little *hodja* followed him half apologetically, but, seeing the governor, plucked up courage and accepted the *rakhi* offered to him. Soon he became excited and his tongue rolled in indecencies.

The air in the room grew thick with tobacco smoke and drink-laden breath. The music grew wilder. Husni and the governor were flicking their fingers to the time and swaying their bodies and beating with their feet and now and again would wail with the singers and cry "Allah ! Allah !" as if they were torn by the agony of love.

And I sat silent, for I could not understand. All this wild confusion of noises meant nothing to me. I could not enter into the excitement nor feel the agony. When suddenly the door opened and with a musical little whoop came Blanche the Dancer.

She was a great artist. When she danced with her

feet, her steps were as dainty as a child playing in the sun. She danced the wild highland dances of Anatolia with a sword in her hand and the guests went wild and beat on the floor till the room rocked, and the poor old fool of a merchant tried to dance too and fell down in a corner. Then she sang and danced a love song, and in her little body, her hips as pliant as young twigs in the wind and her long arms rippling like snakes, she was desire and the call of the flesh and the warmth of woman. The room became tense with desire.

She was no common woman this. A Greek by birth, she was the darling of Stambul. Two officers had committed suicide for love of her. She could play on all the primitive passions, whether she called to their patriotism in a marching song, or their madness in a dance, or to love and lust with the look under her eyes that was like a heaped-up furnace, and with the sway of her body and the lure of her voice. I had ceased to be a stranger sitting alone and cold. With her art she had bridged the great gulf between us. For a minute the jarring discords were gone and I felt the soul of the music. Now I half understood.

Across the heavy atmosphere of the room I could see the little *hodja*, with his fez and its green turban stuck on the back of his shaven head, and his quaint apple-like face wrinkled up with laughter.

"Yahoo!" he called, looking eagerly at Blanche as she stood with her exquisite figure in a tight bodice silhouetted against a lamp. "Yahoo! we surely have here a 'stealer of oranges.'"

But Blanche was talking eagerly to the old merchant

as he sat dizzily in a chair. He had promised to sell her a shop and they called me as witness; and when later I found that she had got it at half price I held the old fool to his bond for his folly.

Then all the room began to tell scandalous stories to each other of their neighbours' wives and their own successes; and the drink loosened the tongue of Sami the Governor, so that he forgot his high rank and exchanged stories with Husni and both became foul-mouthed. The musicians caught the atmosphere and played again wildly and the merchant would dance, and fell down, and they carried him away to sleep on the stone floor of the kitchen. Restraint was gone and as Blanche danced, the room swayed and sighed and beat time, for now she danced with such a quality, as would have set a nunnery doing steps.

Suddenly in the doorway peering through the haze of smoke, with a look of intense disgust on his weather-beaten old face, stood Hadji Ramazan. In a second the foolery was out of Husni, and he went out with him to the kitchen beyond.

There was news. Tahir the Lazz had taken a fat Albanian from behind the village of Mahmud Shevket Pasha and the news was but two hours old. Usually word came days late by devious means. Izzet was a rich man and very fat and lame and, even if they beat him, the brigands could not hope to get far.

We were away at once. I felt Blanche's shoulder by me in the dark kitchen, with a whispered invitation to come to her and in my hand a slip of paper with an address. I found that I was to help a relative of hers

who was in jail. We stepped over the sleeping merchant and out into the cool night, glad to be away from the smoke of tobacco and the stench of spilt alcohol and stale food in oil. Hadji had anticipated orders and the mounted gendarmes were saddling up. My sleepy groom fumbled in the dark with the mare's bridle. Already, as we rode into the cool still night, the debauch was far behind us.

## CHAPTER XXI

### Brigand Hunting : The Death of Tahir The Lazz

WE took the road that runs north along the Bosphorus shore. Sometimes it was broad and good, and then it would become a mere alley-way, twisting through little villages. Save for the clatter of hoofs, the occasional stumble of a horse on a loose flint and the subdued curses of its rider, we rode silently in the lead-coloured hours that drag slowly at the end of night. The villages were buried in sleep. At the sound of our clatter a watchman would beat on the stones with his heavy musical pole and another would reply, and they would call to each other across the silent black world, and say that all was well. Here and there a dog barked, and some cock, thinking the dawn was come, would crow.

We came to the village of Beicos, which the Nationalists had raided in 1920 and from where they had fired on the fleet. The Embassy was a mile across the black water. The fleet lay at anchor below us and, as ever, the ships were talking to each other with sparks of light from the mast-heads. Turning in shore we climbed the steep road that clears the hills, through low scrub

forest where the gendarmes carried their rifles ready on the saddle, and so we came to the crest. With a last look back at the Bosphorus where in the clear black night it gleamed sable and caught the soft light of the myriad stars dusted across the sky, we descended and rode rapidly inland.

We came to Mahmud Shevket Pasha, a Greek village that lay among steep hills with a river running between the houses and a great open square full of ancient chestnut trees. The houses were empty and many in ruins. Only a few villagers had come back to reap the crops. The head man, Constanides, hobbled down to meet us and take us to his house. He was an old man with a twisted back and red bloodshot eyes that watered and showed the insides of the lower lids. His coat and trousers were of rough local weaving and his shoes were of heavy leather and soled with wood. As an autocrat he had ruled this village for many a long day and endeavoured to save it from disaster by steering clear of the rocks of politics.

We found in the house his wife and daughters, terrified by the night's brigandage. There was a son there who was a waiter in Pera and with his broken English, his unpleasant European imitation of clothes and manners, his oily vulgarity and his breath full of the stench of garlic, he represented all that I hated in the Levantine.

Husni had gone to collect the evidence, and while I sat with the headman, the old asthmatic priest of the village came to see us. His long beard was dirty and discoloured. He brought with him a young priest who

was a tall, fierce fanatical fellow with a red light and a roving look in his eye and a nervous manner.

"Three times," said the old headman, holding out his hands in despair, "three times have we left the village and gone down into the city for safety and now we must go again, for we are frightened. In the war the Government told us to go. They made this a centre of a division, and the soldiers broke the houses. Last year Greek brigands raped my two daughters, and the ravishers live still in their village and are safe. This year Turkish brigands have driven away all our cattle; and this night they stole Izzet, the Albanian, as he went home down the road to his farm. We never sleep. If a dog barks, we men rise and creep to the window to see the danger, while the women lie huddled on the floor. We smoke a cigarette under the hand, and watch from the window saying 'They come!' but who comes we know not, and so once more, until again the dogs bark, we lie down."

"Ah," sighed the old priest, "May God give us back the good old days of Abdul Hamid."

The younger man leant over towards me, oily and insinuating. "We pray," he said, "each day in the church for Lloyd George and the coming of the English."

The Head Man looked cautiously round. There was fear in their eyes.

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The scouts said that the brigands had gone north and, as soon as horses and men were fed, we saddled up and were away. Looking back at the village I saw

how, with a thousand others, it had been caught in the storm of the Nations and the maelstrom of Nationalism and been dashed to pieces as a poor weak wreck. The villagers wanted peace to collect their corn and fruit and to sit in the café and talk. But, ignorant of the needs and the objects and the potentialities of each other, that oily wild young priest and his kind had joined hands with Lloyd George, and hundreds of thousands of innocent villagers had to suffer the useless pangs of Hell.

We followed the Riwa river as it raced over rocks between the hills and then out into a broad valley full of hay until we came to the Black Sea, where the north wind had filled the river-mouth with sand and we could ford across.

The brigands were not far ahead of us. They had gone south-east so that we left the sea-shore and made across the woods and towards night came to Polonnez Keuy. It was a village of Poles who had come as refugees from Russian oppression and been given this land by some sultan. Round us were deep woods and in these were the brigands. By now from every gendarme post the infantry had marched and made a cordon round the woods, so that no bread should come through to those we chased. As the people saw us, they plucked up courage and here and there came news that Tahir the Lazz and his men had passed some point at such and such an hour. As long as they held Izzet to ransom, the brigands could not break and scatter.

We made Polonnez Keuy our centre. Its people were but a poor third-rate type that in European coun-

tries lives in the slums of great cities. But even they, with a little work and a little ingenuity, had turned their ground into a paradise. The fields were fenced and full of orchards and rich corn, and the gardens were full of flowers. It was a lesson. It showed what, in skilled sympathetic hands, Anatolia might become; for it bore richly even for these folk.

We lived well, as there were chickens and ducks, as well as pigs that grunted and rooted round and even through the houses. Hadji was in despair. He wished to shoot all the pigs and their litters. He spat extensively at the sight of them and would not even use the word "pig."

This led to a long argument between us, for Hadji had great hopes that one day he would convert me and, being a privileged old man, he impressed on me the foulness of eating "pig-flesh." And I, being in an argumentative mood, suggested that we should go pig-shooting and sell the flesh to the Christians and use the skins for shoes and the money to buy more food for the gendarmes. But Hadji would have none of it. He said that pig-skin must not be close to man's flesh and that "pig-money" was accursed. And so we argued for many weeks, till Husein Husni called three hodjas to the Yeni Mosque of Skutari. There I, the *Giaour* and "the Unbeliever," and Hadji Ramazan the Chaoush, argued on a winter's afternoon. But the hodjas being polite, and moreover being ignorant, gave answers that were inconclusive, except one who said that the eating of pig-flesh destroyed sexual jealousy and made men lax and careless of their womenfolk.

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At last we located Tahir the Lazz in the hills behind Bozhane and so we took horse and made for the village.

Kiamil the *Muktar*, the Headman, a typical, straight-set-up old Turk, met us and invited us with great dignity and much ceremony to sit with him under a shady tree by the village café. One by one the elders and householders came to talk, and as each arrived he *salaamed* in turn to each man present, sat down to rise again and *salaam* once more to all in turn in full and dignified humility. They were fine old aristocrats, these villagers, and Kiamil made a fitting headman. He sat in state against a tree-trunk. His eye was clean and his manner proud. His white hair under his fez was cropped close to the skull. High cheek-bones and an aquiline nose, together with a week's growth of beard and a long moustache, gave him a fierce look. His manner of walking and speaking was almost regal. He wore the peasant clothes of wood-soled black shoes, rough woollen socks, blue trousers that came to his knee and had a pleated seat, a coloured collarless shirt buttoned at the neck and wrists. A richly embroidered jacket was flung round his shoulders. Round his middle was the great belt which Turks wear and which is full of wonderful layers, whence come tobacco and cigarette papers, snuff in a metal box, matches, a knife, money and a hundred vital necessities of life.

He was an enterprising old gentleman, this *muktar*, and kept open house for brigands and gendarmes alike and so escaped both raids and fines. Luck had saved the village from Greeks' depredations. He had known

Tahir as a youth and I begged him to advise the brigand to surrender. I gave him a letter containing a pardon for Tahir, if within two days he would come in with his band and bring Izzet with him. He was not charged with murder, but with attacking Greek troops, collecting money and living free at the expense of the villages, and with the ransoming of a few people. As always, the actions of the Turkish brigands were mild in comparison with the brutalities, murders and crimes of the Greeks.

My letter was passed from hand to hand, and I waited at Bozhane for the result. We sat mostly by the coffee-house and smoked and sipped black coffee. Below us the green ran down to a tributary of the Riwa river. On the bank men were building a rough primitive sea-boat, such as Noah might have put together.

They were deadly dull, these Turks. I looked at the circle of men facing me, as they sat in silence on low cane-bottomed stools without backs. They were devilish dull people. Fundamental differences of ideas, no doubt, made a gap between us. Pictures and art are forbidden by the Koran and the only sense of the artistic that the Turks, as a whole, possess is that of looking at beautiful scenery. Fatalism produces placidity, but not amusement. Beyond talking in the coffee-house, they have no pastimes nor sports. But above all the complete cutting out of women from public and social life produces the flatness as of living for ever in a men's club.

There was no spring and joy in the life. The houses were silent and blind, doors shut and windows with

lattices. There was no calling of woman to woman nor laughter nor even talk, except where the children played on the green and the old men were courteous to me. Occasionally a door opened and a figure in black with a pitcher in its hand would come out, close the door quickly behind it, draw the black cloth even closer across its face leaving one eye to see, and pass us in the sunlight like a black ghost. Not a man looked, nor dared I, for nearly every crime committed by a Turk has a woman mixed in it. These were their women. They could neither read nor write, nor could they have any interests. They were the dull mothers of dull sons.

I was interested to know what sort of school they had, for a fine imposing mosque stood half hidden behind some trees. They told me that there was a mixed school to which the girls went till they were seven.

"And after that," I asked the *Mukhtar*, "where are they taught?"

"They are not taught any more," he replied.

"Then they cannot read or write?" I queried.

"I see no reason why they should," he replied. "Why should the women write except to send love-letters?" And all the elders and the rat-like priest with a green turban round his fez nodded their agreement. The priest began an exposition on the subject when the *Mukhtar* cut in and bade him go about his business.

The Turks have neglected their women as an educational force, and herein lies the main cause of their failure. Their national characteristics have not helped

them to stave off the failure. They are lazy and passive and make no provision for to-morrow, but leave it for God to provide. They have carried their nomad habits into a stationary life and hence have the same lack of stability that is a marked characteristic of the nomad life of the British ruling class in India. As all the people of the Near East, they lack the power of sustained action. The ordinary humdrum routine of life has no interest for them ; but, as they have again and again shown in their history, in the moment of utter defeat and despair they will gird up their loins and do great things.

And in this Islam has aided the national character. For Islam can raise barbarians at a bound to great heights and rouse the sluggard to brilliant enthusiasm, but it cannot sustain them. It has always meant war and force. It has brutalized and degraded again those it has raised. It has shut out from life the softening influence of cultured women and it has failed to create among its women ideals and aspirations and the ability to pass them to their children.

But Islam is a great force in the lives of the Turks. It is intensely human and it enters into the personal detail of each man's life. It decides his hygiene and his eating and his habits. It is full of common sense and rules for his health. The actions of the daily prayers are gymnastic exercises, that will cure an over-filled stomach. Because Islam is a real part of their lives the Moslems profess it openly and pray in public without embarrassment. It has been blamed for keeping women shut up and veiled and so debasing them to the level of animals. The Koran contains no authority

for the Moslem attitude to their women. It does not even enjoin that they shall veil their faces. Centuries ago in Central Asia, and its origin even then hidden in the mists of antiquity, there was a fear that the Devil could whisper in the ears of women and produce abortion, and so women went with their ears covered which meant their hair too. The fear became a superstition and died, but the instinct to cover their hair remained. It was ordered by St. Paul on Christians, that the angels might not be carnally minded. While many Moslems, with their animal jealousy, increased it to the veiling of the whole face.

I looked round at the men in front of me, as I had looked all across Anatolia, for the "Terrible Turk" who had terrified our ancestors and set Europe by the ears; for the men who had stormed at the gates of Vienna, had laid waste Buda-Pest, and massacred Bulgarians and Armenians; for the people whose sovereign had treated the kings of France and England as dirt, and at last deigned to call them the "Brothers of my Grand Vizier." I found quiet, placid people, mild and gentle and excellent hosts, dignified yet courteous in deference. I found them dignified and courtly, but with the dignity of the race of rulers mixed thick with contempt for the ruled.

I saw now that these were still the "Terrible Turks." They were very dull and ignorant. They had no initiative. They desire to be ruled and directed. Left alone to go their own way, they were lost. I have seen sheep in a flock bravely face a clanging tram in a crowded street, but a sheep alone, away from all danger, is a

terror-stricken creature. These Turks had great mass bravery and discipline, but as units they were pitiable. Disease had done them no good. Defeat had done them great harm, but yet they were still, as a whole, simple, sturdy folk, abstemious in their habits. They followed custom and obeyed orders and for the rest sat in the sun and—I was going to say “think”—but they don’t even do that.

“Fine animals,” I said once to Colonel T. E. Lawrence, from Arabia.

“Fine vegetables,” he replied.

They have formed, and still form, magnificent material for troops that must fight shoulder to shoulder. They form the material out of which an absolute autocracy can be built.

The history of Turkey is the history of a few great men, and then the history of a string of bad ones. A few great Sultans and some Grand Viziers made the Empire. As soon as the Sultans failed, so the Empire crumbled. Whatever terrible deed or brave assault they were ordered to achieve these Turks and their ancestors did them in the same solid absolute way of implicit obedience. It was a spring day when the instructions to massacre came to Angora in 1916. The orders were to begin at sunrise on Monday and to finish at sunset on Wednesday. No Christian was touched till Monday. Then they were marched to death, clubbed over the head, drowned, hung and raped. Any who escaped were as safe on Thursday morning as if there had been no massacre.

But these qualities of the Turks are those that can

be most easily exploited, and they have been exploited. Their absolute obedience, due to their natural desire to be controlled and directed, and their blind, unreasoning loyalty has placed them in the hands of their rulers or of any military adventurer who has had the will-power and brains to arrive.

I lodged the night with Kiamil the Muktar. We had early in the afternoon exhausted all possible topics of conversation. Politics were left alone, for what sensible man would discuss politics with a stranger? Women were taboo, and so also was religion. Farming was a possibility, but when it had been said that the corn was good and the barley bad, it was finished. We talked of the air and the water of the village for some time, and then conversation faded away to odd remarks and the rolling and smoking of innumerable cigarettes.

Supper was brought in and after we had eaten we belched luxuriously to show our breeding and smoked again. I was living the real life of a Turk. When I yawned they brought me in a mattress, two hard bolsters for pillows, and a coverlet, and left me to myself. I wanted to read and write but there was no table. Chairs were replaced by a long wooden settee fixed under the windows. The lamp was a little cheap affair that just turned darkness into gloaming. There is no place nor arrangement among Turks whether rich or poor for such things as reading. In their lives there is no going away alone to do these things. They talk, they smoke, they drink coffee and eat their meals. At times they pray and sometimes work, but all these things they do in company.

Failing all else, I lay down to sleep. The mattress was full of knotty bits where the cotton had bunched up and needed beating out. The floor was single and between the planks were great crevices. Below was a stable and a cow-shed. The smell of manure and mud knee-deep came up through the cracks. A cow rattled its chain, as it turned or lay down to sleep, and another blew heavily and chewed. In anticipation I had put down all round me a barrage of Keating's Powder, but the bugs and fleas came through it undaunted. Somewhere in the village they were celebrating a wedding. The beat of hand-drums and long-drawn-out nasal voices just missing all keys came up with the grunts and shouts of people dancing.

I slept restlessly in the early morning and was roused by the sound of milking in the stable below and the gusts of wind that blew up between the cracks in the floor as the stable door was opened.

I wanted to get up and go out but each time I opened the door I heard the rustle of hurrying skirts and the whispering of women. So, perforce, I stayed where I was. When the sun was well up, a man brought a long-necked iron jug, a piece of soap and a towel and poured water on my hands. With this I rubbed out my eyes and washed my hands. For cleaning the back of one's ears or one's neck there was no arrangement. Getting up is a simple process. There are no Muller's exercises, no cold bath and massage, no brushing of hair and teeth and soaping luxuriously. It takes one motion to pull on one's trousers—for the world sleeps in all its underclothes—another to slip on

one's coat, a third to put on one's fez, and the complete man is ready for his morning coffee. Later he may wash his face or his neck or he may not. That is optional. On Thursday a shave and a Turkish bath complete his hygiene, but they also appear to be optional.

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Tahir had sent his reply in a neat phrased letter of an educated man. He refused my offer, said he was a patriot, and would rather die than come in. So we prepared to get to horse and find him. They brought me milk, white cheese, eggs and bread, and then we prepared to leave. The correct phrases of coming and going and their replies with all the formalities of sitting down, getting up, smoking and asking as to health would fill a book, and he who knows these thoroughly, knows half the Turkish language, and might travel from Constantinople to Erzerum and say no more and yet live in comfort.

On the village green we found a crowd, for there was Abdullah, the Chaoush, a member of Tahir's band, and eight of his companions who were tired of being chased and had come to surrender and obtain the pardon I had promised. They brought with them (as a peace-offering) Izzet the Albanian, thinner but unhurt. Brigandage had ceased to be a pleasant game, and its profits were now small.

In gratitude for his release, Izzet, who was both rich and miserly, gave to each of his rescuers one three-penny packet of tobacco. He had made them lavish promises and I expostulated with him, but in vain, and

so we marked up a score against Izzet. Months later we went sixty strong to his farm and there by the laws of hospitality he had to feed us. We ate his eggs and chickens and drank his milk until he had paid a heavy price for his meanness to Abdullah the Brigand.

Now with Abdullah and his men as guides we set out to be finished with Tahir and his band. In all the villages were gendarme posts so that it was hard for him to come by food. We took hostages from all Moslem villages that might help him. We sent out three bodies of picked men to scour through the forest and hills continually. Again and again we were close behind him, and always he escaped us. Our critics began to say that, while we were quick to catch Christians, Moslem brigands slipped easily through our limp fingers.

I had come back to Polonnez Keuy tired and weary from a long trek, when Sidki burst in on me without ceremony and his black eyes all afire.

"Tahir the Lazz is dead!" he said. Sidki was always full of wild stories, if they could bring him any credit, and I was sore and irritable.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Because," he replied, "Tewfik who was second in the band to Tahir is here, and with him the rest of the band, and he says that he shot Tahir in the hills above Eumerli."

They brought Tewfik, the son of Osman, in to me, for Husein Husni the Captain was still out on the hills. He was a small rat of a man with a stoop and a long bedraggled moustache, that half covered a mouth full of foul teeth.



BRIGAND BAND OF TAHIR THE LAZZ. ABDULLA THE CHAUSHI IN THE CENTRE FRONT ROW, ON  
SKUTARI PRISON STEPS



"I shot Tahir the Lazz," he said in reply to my question.

"It is a lie," I bawled; "you come here because you are tired of being a brigand and a chief, and you would earn the reward as well."

He threw out his hands deprecatingly. "Your Excellency may see for yourself, for Tahir lies on the hill above the village of Eumerli."

"Hadji," I called, "they say that Tahir is dead and Tewfik shot him."

"I have heard it, Effendi," he replied. "It is strange that Moslems should shoot Moslems, when there are Christians to be found."

"Hadji," I continued, for he meant no insult to me but rather a compliment, "warn Husein Husni, the Captain, and the doctor to meet me at the Village of the Lazzes and have all ready, for we shall march one hour before dawn to find Tahir the Lazz."

"*Inshallah*, by the grace of God," he replied, and I foolishly in irritation repeated:

"Hadji, we shall—*we shall*—march before dawn," and he solemnly replied:

"By the grace of God, *Inshallah*, Effendi!"

We were away well up to time, and I bade Tewfik ride close to me and tell me his story. He told me how he and Tahir had taken to the hills to fight the Greeks, and so had been outlawed by the British and forced to live by brigandage. He told how the gendarmes had made this life impossible, and how existence had become precarious, "for," he said, "the chase was hot behind us, and my soul hated this life of a wild dog.

Then your letter came and we wished to surrender, but Tahir would have none of it and called us weaklings. Then we were hunted again, and we determined to be done with it.

"Yesterday in the afternoon Tahir went to the spring to drink and left his rifle with me," he continued, raising his voice that all might hear, for he was plainly proud of his treachery, and I felt the gendarmes press in close on their horses to hear the story.

"Then I and Jemil took the cartridges from his rifle, and when he returned I spoke to him more roughly and said that we had all to gain and nothing to lose by surrender. But he cursed me for a coward and a traitor and declared that he would never surrender to be put in prison and he threatened me with his rifle. In his rage he had not looked to see if it was loaded. Then I fired all my five cartridges into him and we left him dead and came down and surrendered."

As he finished his story I heard the gendarmes sigh and rein back their horses.

We came to the Village of the Lazzes set deep in the forest and there found Husein Husni and the doctor and the brother and wife of Tahir, and, after we had eaten, we set out again taking them with us to identify the body.

Tewfik led the way. We climbed up through the forest by steep little paths, where the branches beat into the rider's face. We came out under pine-trees where the sand gave way and the pine-needles made the going slippery, so that the mare picked up her steps warily. We climbed by twisted mountain paths, over rocks, and

through undergrowth, where we could see but a few yards, and the gendarmes carried their rifles ready across the saddle. Then we topped a sudden rise beneath tall trees and came into a little glade.

Far below us mile upon mile the tree-tops extended down the rolling hills. The hills were scarred, weather-beaten and torn ; with here and there a tiny field broken out of their gaunt sides. Hills and valleys twisted down to the plain and the Sea of Marmora, which lay a rich deep blue in the autumn light. Its shores were fringed with villages of white villas with red roofs and gardens full of trees. The Islands of the Princes were glowing hotly in the evening sun. A ship from the Dardanelles cut her way up across the placid sea, and left a long trail of white behind her. Far in the background, their feet shrouded in mist, the Anatolian hills stood massive and threatening to the sky.

Tahir the Lazz was there in the glade. The doctor bent over him. He called the wife to him. She lifted her thick veil to look, and the brother came and answered the doctor's questions. Then they squatted down. The woman wailed softly behind her veil. The man was silent. The woman would have touched her husband's hands, but the wolves and the jackals had found him in the night and made that impossible.

In the shade farther up the hill sat Tewfik son of Osman with a look of pride on his face. He rolled a cigarette and nibbled the edge of the paper with his discoloured teeth before he licked and stuck it. He said something to Sidki who lounged beside him, and they laughed together, and looked at the woman with

lust in their eyes. I felt a sense of anger at his evil gloating. A bird called to its mate and flitted across the glade. A blackbird scolded. The evening sun was throwing long shadows. The spring laughed with life, as it broke out of the hill and went gurgling down into the darkness of the forest. A nightingale caught its breath and burst into song. Lower down the gendarmes were feeding their horses and smoking. With a look at the sun to see the time and the direction, Hadji Ramadan spread his little carpet and, turning towards Mecca, recited the evening prayer. A stallion below squealed with pure devilment.

As I turned down the hill with the doctor I heard the men scratching a hole to hide Tahir from the flies and the jungle. My heart was heavy. I was startled by the crack of a rifle. The doctor assured me it was some careless mistake. In the valley Hadji caught us. He was leading his stallion down the steep slope, with his rifle slung over his shoulder. Driven by impulse, I put my hand on the muzzle. It was hot. Hadji looked at me straight with a steady eye. It bade me beware and not interfere in private matters. "And Tewfik comes?" I asked.

"He has gone to his own, Effendim. They are digging a second grave," he replied.

"He tried to escape," interposed Sidki the Liar, and broke off as he caught the laughter in my eyes.

We slept that night at Alemdar to the south. Next day we started away early for Skutari, but already the sun was up hot and fierce as we left the cool shade of the woods and crossed the rolling empty hills that lie

behind the Bosphorus. Once there had been trees here also and shady oaks, but the Turks cut down all trees, and leave barren empty spaces in their place. Throughout this area there was hardly a bird or a shrub except round some village.

It was sunset as we clambered up the last hill and over the top. The dusk was settling in the valleys and over the Bosphorus. From all the mosques below in Skutari and in the city came up the call to prayer, "God is Great." As we came down, the clouds glowed hot, where the sun had sunk behind the minarets of the mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent. As I slipped stiffly from my tired mare in the square of the gendarmerie barracks below us the hundred thousand lights of ships on the Bosphorus and of houses and streets began to twinkle in the dark.

## CHAPTER XXII

### The Greco-Turkish War : The Summer Offensive on Angora, 1921

**B**ETWEEN our area and the rest of Anatolia, laid down as a frontier by the Allied High Commissioners, was an imaginary line. It was a frontier only on paper. It had no guards or soldiers on it, because there were none to put there. To the Turks who lived on both sides of it it meant nothing, because the whole was Turkey. For the minute the Greeks and the Turks respected this frontier. They were both fully engaged with the other, and had no desire to be embroiled with the Allies as well.

Anatolia had become a vast camp. The Turks were straining every muscle as they organized and developed a fighting force. The Greeks spent April, May and June of 1921 shipping over guns and men and stores, and preparing to make their second big push, and so bring the war to a close. To both the combatants from England, France, Italy and America were shipped large consignments of stores, clothing, arms and ammunition, and all that soldiers require to kill each other. The merchants of Allied nationalities, sometimes subsidized by their Governments, bought up surplus stocks

of war material and did good trade with the combatants. Here and there I was surprised to find Ottoman Greeks selling boots to Angora. Cynicism often lies lightly on men in great places. The Allied Powers, who had fought the Great War "to end all war" and who had formed the League of Nations, proclaimed publicly that, as they were neutral, their nationals were at liberty to supply war stores to the combatants. In these circumstances it was a piece of cynicism almost unparalleled.

In June the British offered to mediate, and the Greeks refused. They have been harshly criticized for this. Such criticism is unjustified. The Greeks at the instigation of the Allies had put their finger into the sausage-machine and slowly it ground them all through to sausage. They could not extract themselves without immediate amputation and disaster. King Constantine and his followers were the heirs of M. Venizelos, and the legacy that they had received was not one to be envied. M. Venizelos had calculated as the basis of his policy the facts that the Allies were behind him and that the Allies were almighty. But now they were not almighty and, with the exception of the British, they had become actively hostile. To consolidate his own position, King Constantine had to go forward for a great military victory. All the resources of Greece had been thrown into Anatolia and to withdraw now meant ruin, bankruptcy, dishonour and revolution. He was forced pitilessly to go forward in the hopes of winning a success out of the misty future.

On the 10th of July the Greeks advanced in their great summer offensive. They hurled the Turks back

off the railway from Eski-Shehir and Kutahia and Afion-Kara-Hissar, but their strategy failed to enable them to catch and destroy the Turkish main armies which, being very mobile, slipped away. The Turks made a counter-attack and failed and began to retreat.

On the 14th of August in the torrid heat that eats up the land of Anatolia, the Greeks moved all their troops in a great concentrated advance on Angora. They pushed the Turks in front of them until they reached the Sakkaria river. This was the last obstacle between them and the Nationalist capital. There across the river they fought a tremendous battle where the issue was constantly in doubt. Both sides fought with a fierce courage. The percentage of casualties was very high. Neither side had a moral superiority over the other, for the Greeks despised the Turks, and the Turks sneered at the Greeks as their old subjects. Both were full of the venom of an hereditary hatred. As a whole it appeared that, in contradiction to previous experience, the Greek soldier surpassed the Turk. In the matter of staffs and commanders the Turks were far the superior.

The Turks held their ground. The Greeks came marching back over the Sakkaria river and formed up in order. Unharassed to any extent by the enemy, they retired back across Anatolia. By the end of September they had taken up the position they had prepared in July, in front of Eski-Shehir and Afion-Kara-Hissar and the railway.

In these military operations the Greeks fell into an error that has been repeated throughout history. The whole and only object of military manœuvres is to pin

down and destroy the enemy's fighting forces. All other movements and destruction are subsidiary to this end. Napoleon points out that the concentration on the capture of an important town has ruined many a commander. In advancing from their poor winter position to the line covering the railway in front of them the Greeks had full justification. Their subsequent plan in August was to rush at Angora 200 miles to the east, destroy it, frighten the Turks and then, having won a moral position, to fall back on the old line and come to terms with the enemy. But Angora was no more than a village, and behind it were unlimited mountains and desert spaces, and men fighting for their homes.

Having failed to obtain their objective, the Greeks endeavoured to attain their end on their retreat by systematic destruction. They destroyed the whole area. They tore up every mile of the permanent way of the railway. They cut down the trees, killed every Turk who was foolish enough to be still there, and for 200 miles behind them left desolation and the villages flat with the ground.

Their new line covered the railway. Its communications with the base were a good road that was well protected and a railway that was open to sudden raids. In due course the Turks reorganized their badly mauled forces, and followed up the enemy. They took up a position facing the Greeks and there for a year, except for outpost encounters, the hostile forces sat immobile. Victory lay with the side that had the greater morale, and the greater amount of grit and staying power.

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Greeks found their backers had disappeared. The British began openly to doubt their ability to stay in Anatolia. The Italians had no liking for them. The French had swung right over and were actively assisting the Turks with aeroplanes and war material.

The French had observers in Angora. They now sent M. Franklin-Bouillon to come to terms with the Turks. He worked in secret and by stealth ; but there are no secrets in Turkey. It is a vast whispering gallery and the only hope of secrecy is in the fact that so many are the lies that the truth may be sometimes buried beneath them.

The Italian and the British Governments watched the negotiations from a distance. Their position and the urgent instructions to M. Franklin-Bouillon from Paris were a caustic commentary on secret diplomacy. It became obvious that the French were bargaining for special trade facilities and had guaranteed to press for the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres. It had little force with the French Government that they had promised to make no separate peace with the enemy ; and on the 20th of October, 1921, they signed, without reference to their allies, a secret treaty of peace with the Turks. Every chancellery in Europe was aware of its existence, but it had to be left to an American journalist to find a copy and publish it to the world before diplomatic action could be taken.

The Greek sticking power was limited. Their resources had been strained to the utmost and were near to snapping. At home they were torn by the factions of Royalist and Venizelist who hated each other as much

as they hated the enemy. The new officers and officials were more corrupt and less efficient than the old. They are as a people unstable and swayed easily by the passions of the moment. The morale of the troops was undermined by communiqués from the new Commander-in-Chief, Hadjienestis, to the effect that they were to leave Anatolia shortly and by the proposal of the Allies, made officially in March 1922, that they should evacuate at once. The administrative services began to go to pieces and the men were left short of food, pay, clothes and ammunition. All the enthusiasm was steadily sapped out of the nation and out of the troops.

Meanwhile the Turks found allies in the French and the Caucasian Soviet Republics and in Moscow and every country in Asia which was in revolt against Europe. Their success at the Sakkaria battle had given them a new hope. Roused, they were fighting doggedly for their homes and their lives. They are a primitive people, and as long as the kindly Powers gave them war material they could last. They were buoyed up with the new spirit of a new nation. Under the intense stimulus of war old ideas were developing and new ones were being evolved. Here and there incidents showed the stirring of the new idea and of the new forces and new conceptions. For the minute, fierce with hatred, they concentrated on destroying the Greeks. So for a year, from September 1921 to September 1922, the enemies faced each other while the Greeks grew pallid, tired and nerveless, and the Turks grew robust and lusty and strong.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### A Lull between the Storms

UNDISTURBED by the war in Anatolia, the Allies within the neutral zone carried on in tranquillity. Pera had settled down under the flatness of peace. Now and again there would be a flare of excitement. In September came the first of a number of scares of plots. The Commander-in-Chief was to be killed, and with him his staff. The authorities grew busy and even excited. Orders were issued to arrest the plotters, and copies were sent to all the High Commissioners and the Ottoman War Office and the Chief of the Police.

Then from the Marquis Garroni in the Italian Embassy right down to the loafers in the Skutari streets every one laughed. The addresses of the plotters were unknown but among those on the lists sent with the orders for arrest were *Fethi Bey* and *Ali of Yalova* and *Kemal of Adrianople* and many such. In England they would represent *Mr. Jones*, *Alfred of York* and *Harold of Manchester* with "addresses unknown." The police smiled discreetly. The gendarmerie laughed out loud. Between them they arrested quite a number of men with the right names but wrong personalities, and



later these were graciously released. Somewhere a number of agents and interpreters drew their well-earned pay for the month of September.

In October I was detailed to proceed with the commission that was to exchange the fifty odd Turks confined in Malta with the British prisoners in the hands of the Nationalists. We lay off Ineboli in the Black Sea in a storm that blew out of the Crimea and roused the sea until the destroyers dipped their sterns under each mountainous wave. I went ashore to start negotiations and found the Nationalists intensely hostile, offensive and ungracious. All the pleasant good feeling which existed towards us during the war was gone. I watched the prisoners go ashore with mixed feelings. To see Rahmi Bey and Reouf Bey free was to be glad that justice was being done. To see Mazlum Bey, the late commander of Afion-Kara-Hissar, and other foul criminals go scot-free was to feel to the full the humiliating weakness of the British Empire; for Mazlum was a murderer in cold blood of British soldiers. As we sailed away with only half the British prisoners which we had expected to recover, I was glad to be finished with an episode in which I had been so deeply involved and which had befouled our good name for so long.

My gendarmerie area was now quiet except in the south where the Greek troops held one shore of the Gulf of Ismidt and we the other. Along our shore were many Greek villages. Encouraged by the proximity of the Hellenic troops, the villagers refused to pay taxes and often brawled with the Ottoman officials.

The village of Pendik was especially bad. The priest

was a trouble-monger and the people sullen and obstinate. I wished to see for myself, and so with Husein Husni and Sami the Governor I took the train from Haidar Pasha station.

Haidar Pasha begins the eastern section of the great railway planned from Berlin to Bagdad. From here along the Marmora shore to Eski-Shehir and then by Konia to the Cilician Gates and down to Aleppo and Mosul, the railway follows the route along which for centuries trade has travelled and along which many of the great conquerors have marched to the dominion of the world. Cyrus of Persia, Alexander of Macedon, the Seljuk Turks and the Crusaders used it. The Romans and Napoleon realized its value.

The Germans had seen that whoever holds this route may threaten and dominate the whole Near East. They had dreamt a great dream of the railway from Haidar Pasha to the Taurus, tapping the wealth of Syria and threatening Egypt, and then across to Bagdad and Basra, and perhaps some day to India. The surplus population of Germany was to have been planted as colonists in the potentially rich valleys of Anatolia, and German efficiency and hard work were to have revived a dead world. It was the dream of a great Eastern Empire. It was born at Haidar Pasha and there it died. Over the station was a great clock. Above it a twisted girder and a broken chimney stood gaunt up against the sky. The clock had stopped at 12.31. It was the time of the great explosion of 1917. The yards and the trains had been packed with ammunition and guns to be sent to the Turkish forces facing Generals Allenby

and Maude. A train, full of German experts, was about to move off when a terrific explosion occurred. Tons of ammunition, supplies, steel girders, bits of train and lines were thrown into the air. At the other end in Mesopotamia and Syria the Turks went short of food and ammunition, while General Allenby advanced. The clock was the symbol of a great idea caught by the throat and its neck broken.

We travelled through the rich villages that throng the Marmora shore. They are mainly Christian. At last we came to Pendik. There had been a further fight with the tax-collectors that morning, and we called the headman and elders, together with the Moslem hodja and the Greek priest, to meet us on the pier by the coffee-shop.

We sat with our backs to the sea and they faced us in a half-circle. The Governor had his say, and then I appealed to them, both Moslem and Christian, to forget the wrongs they had done each other, to put politics aside and live as Ottomans in peace and harmony.

They sat in silence looking on the floor, except the Greek priest whose eyes kept staring intently past me. Instinctively I looked round. Behind us the Marmora ran into the narrow gulf of Ismidt. The opposite shore, two miles away, stood out clear across the calm blue water. Towering up into the windless sky were five straight columns of smoke. As an allied commission saw them at their foul work, the Greek troops were raping, pillaging and burning in the Moslem villages and many Ottoman Greeks were helping them. The rest of my carefully prepared speech died in my throat.

In the gendarme post outside the village lay an old Greek watchman. He had refused bread to Zaffiri and the brigands had beaten him with the sharp edges of knives, as they had beaten the woman of the village of Jews. As he lay in his blood-soaked clothes and died slowly, he told us all he knew and that the band was out in the open country.

Messages were sent to put in motion every gendarme to intercept the brigands. We took horses from Pendik and set out northwards. The street was bright and warm in the pleasant winter's sun. At the last corner sat a beggar. His legs were stumps horribly mauled and exposed to win pity. He had one withered arm drawn across his breast. The palm of his hand was turned up for alms and the fingers were all twisted together. His head was shaved close. He had but one eye. The other was a glaring white socket. He sat in the bright sun while the wind brought up the taste of good salt from the sea. He mewed at me, for his tongue had been torn out. He looked as if he had been half pinched in some colossal and horrible vice. He had once been comely and strong, but the Turks had massacred his village and he had been left mutilated and for dead. He had revived and in his twisted awful deformity, in the open sunny street, he sat a fitting relic of Ottoman rule.

We came to the Moslem village of Samandra, and decided to rest the night. When the Governor sat to hear complaints, an old Armenian hobbled up to accuse the villagers of persecuting him. Our inquiries showed that he was the rich man of the village, but he would

not pay the watchman's tax which came to a few coppers each week and was paid without question by all the other householders. Thirty years before he had come as a penniless labourer to the village. Now he owned half of it and held mortgages on the rest. He took us to his house which he had built in an underground Genoese bazaar. This he had excavated and made into an oil-press. He was a bent old man, and he walked with two sticks. His shoes were of heavy wood and he wore the pleated trousers of the Armenians which have a seat that hangs down to the heels. As he peered up at us out of his grimy room with his wicked old face and crafty eyes, he looked like some great toad. I expressed my opinion that he ought to pay. Whereupon he pushed some money into my hand and bade me pay the headman. This man had refused to pay for twenty years. He had lived alone, the only Christian among Turks. They had murdered his relatives in other villages. He had been beaten and imprisoned and yet he refused to pay, and finally he paid because a stranger said he ought to pay. His mental process was impossible to follow, and his obstinacy was characteristic of his race.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### The Christian Minorities

THE most difficult problem which confronted the Gendarmerie Supervising Officers was caused by the relations between the Christians and Moslems in Turkey. The more I saw of them, the more complicated they appeared, and the more difficult it became to arrive at just decisions.

The question of the Christian Minorities had its roots in far-distant history. Its influence had spread beyond Turkey and become part of the variegated texture of international diplomacy. The waves of Turkish hordes of invaders, that resulted in the conquest of Anatolia and the supremacy of the Osmanlis, had swept over old civilizations that were stale and long since diseased. They did not destroy them nor yet absorb them, but often they borrowed their worst characteristics. Thus, from the Byzantines, the Osmanlis took the practices of farming taxes and of ill-treating ambassadors.

The Turks made no attempts to absorb the Christian communities that they conquered. As long as they paid taxes and were obedient the Christians were allowed full liberty to rule themselves. Thus it happened that, while the Government of the Ottoman Empire was

Turkish, it contained representatives of the Christian communities and these, which produced all the wealth, were semi-self-governing.

For a while the Greeks obtained such influence that at one time they virtually controlled the administration of the Ottoman Empire. This period of what is known as that of the "Phanariot Rule" came to an end with the revolt of Greece proper in 1821. From this date onwards each success of the Greeks of Greece spelt disaster for the Greeks of Turkey. It is instructive to remember that the original revolt of the Hellenes was made possible by the rapacity and extortion of their Phanariot Greek rulers.

As long as the Empire was all-powerful the Turks were content; but times changed. From the defeat in front of Vienna and the death of Suleiman the Magnificent the Turkish power declined rapidly, until by the eighteenth century each and every observer prophesied its immediate dissolution.

In Europe there came an age of expansion and every great nation looked on Turkey with greedy eyes. One by one they pressed in on her, eager for their share of the spoils at her imminent dissolution. The diplomats found a congenial sphere and played one against the other till the tottering Ottoman Empire was buttressed up on every side by the rivals. Jealous of each other they maintained the moribund state, but all were afraid to rush in and complete the destruction. Russia made one bold attempt in the early nineteenth century, and it resulted in her defeat in the Crimean War. Pieces of territory were torn away, when occasion served.

The French seized Algeria. The British took Egypt. The Austro-Hungarians took Herzegovina and Bosnia. But the main body of the Empire, though diseased and paralysed, remained intact.

Direct assault being impossible, the Powers sought other methods. They proclaimed themselves the champions of the down-trodden Christian communities. Russia obtained the right to protect the Orthodox, and France to protect the Roman Catholic subjects of the Porte. Using these rights they fomented rebellion within ; and, adding to them the stringent control of the Capitulations, they reduced the Ottoman Empire to a state of servitude. Turkey had ceased to be a sovereign power, when the sudden and meteoric arrival of Germany threw all the other calculations into confusion.

Nationalism, the child of the French Revolution, had by the twentieth century become the outstanding characteristic of Europe. Its influence came to Turkey. The Christian communities became political organizations, and nationalities engaged in a fierce struggle for existence. The Patriarchs became as it were their Consul-Generals. That struggle was intensified by the interference of the foreign Powers.

But the Turks were impregnated by the same idea. It was the foundation of the Committee of Union and Progress. It was the war-cry of the revolution of 1908. The Turks were determined to "turkify" Turkey. Instigated by the foreign Powers, the Christians refused to become Turks, and so the breach that had been between Moslem and Christian was now widened.

These and a complication of other facts were the causes of the mutual slaughter of the massacres. Foreign interference was the venom that drove the Christians to obstinate resistance and the Turks to kill. In 1878 the Treaty of Berlin decided to protect the Armenians, and was the direct cause of their massacre in 1896. To the Turks their Christian subjects now threatened their state and their religion and had become traitors. They developed the hatred that, in very similar circumstances, drove the English of the Middle Ages to persecute the Jews. They feared the secret political organizations with their foreign links. The Christians threatened their existence at every point. The Turk for one reason and another had become sterile. Their women, though broad-hipped, produced few children and those born died young. On the other hand the Christians multiplied like flies in a valley of offal.

Economically the Turks were being crushed out. The Christians were the workers and the hoarders, while the Turks were soldiers and spenders. In England we deal with economic problems of wealth distribution by super-tax and such like legal methods. The Turks endeavoured to deal with theirs by murdering the collectors of wealth and so taking back by force what had been won from them by work and brains. As an expert once said: "A good Government must always be on the side of the craftiest and cunningest, even the worst section of the population. If the Turk is given 'good government' he must come to an end; for if he cannot murder the Greek and the Armenian, they will outbreed him and buy him up."

Military reasons, especially during the Great War, added their quota. The Greek massacres of 1916 were due to the occupation of Mytilene and the islands off the mainland by the Allies. The Armenians lay between the Turks and their relatives of Central Asia. They were a bar to the realization of the Pan-Turanian policy, and so with ruthless cruelty they were wiped away.

The Armistice found the Turks beaten to their knees. Scattered over Anatolia lay the torn remnants of the Christian Minorities. Their ancient instigators to resistance were now the world victors. In the struggle for nationalism the Turks appeared to have gone under. All the separate sects shouted that they were free and demanded recognition. The Peace Conference lent a ready ear to their demands. They were treated as allies and fully utilized. They believed that the Turks were at an end. They insulted them gratuitously. An Armenian-Greek section was formed in the British Embassy to right all their ancient wrongs. The Greeks of Greece were sent into Anatolia as the Allied police. The Ottoman Greeks claimed their revenge at the British Embassy, and took it in massacring with the Hellenic troops.

They put forward fantastic claims. The bishop and people of Trebizond demanded a Pontus State. The Armenians plotted out their new country to run from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and to cover some 400,000 square miles. They demanded that the Allies should eject all Moslems from this area. They issued delightful booklets over the signatures of M. Aharonian and Boghos Nubar giving tables of their

virtues and ending with the delightful qualification for ruling by the Armenian race "which in addition is remarkably prolific."

The Allies contracted with demobilization and withdrew, leaving their wretched protégés to the mercy of their rulers. In a fury, that can be well understood, the Turks came back with murder in their hearts. To them all the Christians were now traitors. The worst brutalities of the Greek troops had been instigated and assisted by the Ottoman Christians. The Turks set to work to wipe them out finally, much as a surgeon cuts away some growth which the body cannot absorb and which threatens life.

In all these changes and these fierce struggles of nationalities the Moslem and the Christian showed themselves equally villainous in their bestialities. Which-ever side got on top massacred the other. In the Revolt for Independence the Greeks murdered the Turks in the Morea. In 1917 the Turks massacred the Greeks. In 1919 the Greeks retaliated round Smyrna, and again in 1920 and 1921. In 1922 the Turks took their revenge and wiped out the Ottoman Greeks. In 1915 the Turks had massacred the Armenians. In 1916 the Armenian Christian Army of Revenge came down with the Russians and killed all the Moslems of Van, while our noble allies, the Russians wiped out every Turk round Rowanduz. This list could be continued in red entry on red entry. The result of outside interference has been to intensify the brutalities. It can only be said that Greek and Turk and Armenian understand each other far better than we understand any of them, and all would

have been better off, if Europe had left them alone.

The misery of the peasantry, the ruin of the countryside and the fact that the hills were full of brigands were the direct results of the terrible history of this mutual massacre of neighbours.

We in the gendarmerie areas were late comers and we saw only the end of the struggle. The Treaty of Sèvres, which we were enforcing, made a last effort to save the Christians. Beyond us now across all Anatolia the limited massacres were replaced by deliberate and careful extermination.

The supervising officers were instructed to see that the peasantry, and especially the Christians, were not ill-treated by the Ottoman officials. It was not an easy task, for though often justice seemed with the Christians, their personal and national characteristics made it hard to stand by them and hold out continually the hand of friendship. Christianity did not come into the question for "our common Christianity was not a living reality, but a historical curiosity." The Christians often appealed to it, but they found but little response among the British.

Whereas the Turks, despite their record of vice and brutality, are pre-eminently lovable and have great charm, the Ottoman Greeks are crude, noisy and unlovable. They are hard-working and vociferous. Though rarely physically brave, they have much mental and verbal truculence.

The Armenians are a black-haired, black-eyed people with runaway foreheads and hooked noses like the Hittites. About them there is nothing kindly. They

are crafty, grasping, hard-working and dishonest. They are a highly nervous, over capable and over intelligent race. They are afflicted with an obstinacy that would enrage the mildest tyrant. They cannot and will not submit to any rule.

The Christians imitate and so burlesque European manners and ways. They irritate in details—in the way they eat and walk and talk. Even when giving me hospitality they drove me to distraction. They have the craft, the dishonesty, the cheap trickery and the oily, cringing subservience mixed with truculence that are the result of centuries of oppression. Ill-treated children develop such characteristics. Often it required all my sense of discipline to keep down my irritation and see justice done to a Christian by a courteous and charming and quite unjust Turkish official.

As the old toad-like Armenian peered up at me out of his grimy room in Samandra village, I could not help admiring the tenacity of his race nor help realizing the tragic complications of these problems, to which I was but an observer from the outside.

## CHAPTER XXV

### The End of Brigandage—in the Ismidt Area

WE had decided to stay that night at Samandra. Sami the Governor had left for Skutari. Hardly had it grown dark, before the headman of the neighbouring Greek village of Pasha Keuy, with infinite precautions and stealth, came to me. Our luck was in. The brigands had grown drunk in Pasha Keuy. The headman had been wantonly beaten by Zaffiri, and now was eager for revenge. He told us of the secret oven in his village from where the Greek brigands got their bread. He told us of a lair to which Zaffiri had gone and which was an old cowpen on a hill-top deep in the great forest.

Husein Husni was still out on the hills. I called Zia the Lieutenant, a small dapper man as hard and wiry as a hill goat. He was eager for a chance, for hitherto it had been his work to sit in Head-quarters and extract information from prisoners. It had half-frozen my blood more than once to find him sitting cold and impassive, without any of the lust of cruelty in him, jotting down methodically the words that escaped some twisting tortured prisoner ; such are ways of Turkish justice. We set out with Hassan, the Bash-Chaoush, a huge swarthy

serjeant with a fierce swagger, and with two dozen mounted men.

As we came to the forest a great storm came bursting down off the Black Sea. It was pitch dark. Through the trees the wind drove the rain into our eyes, till they tingled as if beaten with fine spikes. Underfoot the narrow paths were of slippery clay and full of pools of water. The forest was alive. The storm had loosed a thousand devils, who whistled through the tree-tops and screamed and filled the forest with a great roar. The strength of nature came hurtling by in tremendous and terrifying force. Now and again with a boom and a crash a tall tree came down.

In the dismal rain-swept dawn under low scurrying clouds we reached the hill. We dismounted and prepared to clamber up it in a circle. The cowshed was well placed. The hill was covered with low scrub till near the top and then was bare with the cowshed making a good look-out over all. The gendarmes had come out of the scrub and were round the shed in a circle. There was no sign of life. In the dreary dawn I told the headman in muttered whispers what I would do to him if he had lied.

There was a yard round the shed and a low wall with a door. I bade Hassan the Bash-Chaoush kick in the door. I wished to give him another chance to retrieve his character for he had done good work in the past and now stood to be disgraced. Sometimes the beast got the upper hand with him, and only last week he had gone philandering and beaten all the male relations of the lady, when they objected.

As he burst open the door a man with a rifle stood up. He was the sentry and Demitri the half-brother of Zaffiri. To avoid the wind he had, at the moment that the gendarmes came out of the scrub, bent down to roll and light a cigarette and so had failed to see us or give the alarm. Behind him in the shed were Pavli and Zaffiri and the rest of the band. They sat submissively with their hands between their knees and made no resistance. Without enthusiasm we led them away. At last the area was free.

Zaffiri was a quiet-looking fellow, but before we handed him over to the central prison he confessed to eighty-seven murders. Behind the cowshed the gendarmes had found two skeletons. We put them down in Zaffiri's cell and he confessed to their murder.

"And why did you kill them?" I asked.

"Effendi," he replied, "Demitri had newly joined the band and he did not know how to kill. We saw these two Albanians come over the hill; so we caught them and held them. Demitri is a poor hand at such things, and it was a long time before he killed them properly."

Our captures were kept in the great central prison in Stambul. I visited them and found them all shut into one large underground room, such as I had seen in the days of my own captivity. Among them were a number of men who were innocent witnesses of the crimes committed. Some of these had been put in there two years before by the British military authorities. They had been kept confined until the criminals were caught, and now they were all herded together, witnesses and criminals alike.

After I left, there was a quarrel over a game of cards. The prisoners dug nails out of the walls, sharpened them and fought. Zaffiri, being clever, cut the electric light and crouched in a corner. When the warders came to separate them, Zaffiri alone was unhurt. Karao-glan was badly wounded and died. Twenty more were full of holes.

As it was now free of brigands we set to work to bring prosperity to the area. I learnt the love of the administrator which is as all-absorbing as the love of women, the making of money or the intensity of the religious fanatic. It is a thing out of the knowledge of the Labour Party or the stay-at-homes, who label it as the spirit of Imperialism and pile abuse on it. It is beyond the calculations of the dry-as-dust; and it would take such a dreary brain as that of John Stuart Mill's to call the Empire, that it has built, a "system of out-relief for the younger sons of the aristocracy."

It absorbed life and every minute and all the energy of it. We put the villages straight. We built the roads. We chased out fear as a dominant factor and attracted back some sense of confidence. We doctored the people and protected them and connected telephones to their villages. The Law Courts returned to Skutari. The taxes began to show that there was an increase in prosperity. Life began to become normal. The people became my people, and this land my land.

All this was far harder work than brigand-catching, for the Turks especially have to be helped by force and only long afterwards are they grateful. Moreover while it was the excitement of the chase the gendarmes

were excellent, but in the normal routine of every day they grew slack. The Turkish officers were of little use. They neglected their men. They were the worst "man-masters" possible. The senior officers expected to be supplied free with eggs and chickens and ducks and to have a share in any wood contracts. The men, though short of clothes and pay and food, looked up to their officers. Also they looked after their officers. They carried on at their duties and in cases of emergency were capable of real effort. Treated with any care, they would be excellent. They would equally quickly be spoilt by over-care.

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The area was running well. The Turkish officials, from Sami the Governor downwards, were working with us. The war away beyond us in Anatolia was at a standstill and affected us but little. In June 1922 I asked for leave and it was granted.



BRIGAND BAND OF ZAFFIRI, KARAOGLAN AND PAVLI HAND-CUFFED, ZAFFIRI TO THE LEFT LOOKING BAD AFTER HIS BEATING



## CHAPTER XXVI

### The Balkans, Central Europe and England in 1922

I HAD said *au-revoir* to all my villages and my gendarmes and had come back to pack when Prince Sami, the stepson of Damad Ferid Pasha, the brother-in-law of the Sultan and ex-Grand Vizier, called me on the telephone and asked me to see him urgently at the Pera Palace Hotel.

As soon as I arrived I was ushered into a special saloon. I found Prince Sami with a revolver in his hip-pocket and another laid ready on a table. The glass doors of the salon were covered with screens. The red curtains had been drawn across the long French windows. He looked behind each curtain and under each piece of furniture. He spoke in a whisper. It was a comedy of the complete conspirator, and I found it hard to restrain my laughter. But the message that he wished to give me was far from comic.

It was from the Sultan. Prince Sami had long held a special position with His Majesty and he had been trusted with this. The message was simple. The Sultan said, "Tell Mr. Lloyd George and those in power in England that the end is near. They do not

understand. I have told the British Embassy, and they do not believe. The men of Mustapha Kemal are revolutionaries. They will turn Turkey upside-down. They will not respect me nor my office. They will destroy religion. They are your enemies. They are rebels and my enemies. I believe that you are the only salvation of Turkey and I am your friend. From Angora you will get nothing. I will give you what you want. If you wish to save the Sultanate and the Khalifate, you must come quickly to my help. Refuse to recognize Angora, and make peace with me. Give me a good peace, and all that you are prepared to give to Angora. Guarantee that the Greeks shall leave Anatolia, and hand it over to me bit by bit as they go. Give me a loan of £4,000,000, against which you shall have sound mortgages. With these I will put a good government in power. I will go personally to Brusa and call my people to me. Many of them still fight to release the Khalif from Allied bondage, and they will come. I will make friends with the French and be part of the Entente. Together we will revive Turkey and make her prosperous, but there must be no mandates. I will help traders. I will keep the Straits open. I will stand by you as the Khalif, for you have been the defenders of the faithful. I will protect the Christians, who will be my loyal subjects. The men of Angora are full of blood and red ideas from Moscow, and will do none of these things."

It was the last appeal of the House of Osman, which had once ruled half the world. It was the funeral dirge of the only policy that could have helped the Allies.

It was too late. Two years before, even one year before, it might have succeeded. It had been often proposed to and then ignored by Whitehall. Prince Sami, Damad Ferid Pasha, a few disgruntled politicians and a handful of palace officials were now all that was left of the millions of subjects of the Sultan. Prince Sami with his revolvers, his whispering, his excited exclamations on spies as the shadow of a waiter passed one of the glass doors, only accentuated the truth and made a comedy of a tragedy.

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Politeness, like many a virtue, is often uncompanionable and tiring. As was the custom in Turkey, Sami the Governor and all the officers, with Hadji to represent the cavalry and Hassan the infantry, came to see me off. They had piled my carriage full of baskets of sweets, macaroons and Turkish delight. I ate those sweets till I was ill. I fed the population at each station till they had toothache. The guard, the engine drivers, the *chefs-de-gare* went about their work with great lumps in their cheeks. Ticket collectors, passport men and contraband hunters became sticky and pleasant; and left me in peace. Still I had made but little effect on the mass, and in desperation I dumped it on a German *frau* and her bespectacled family and left them methodically chewing.

Hardly were we out of Constantinople before we were amongst Greek troops. Here they were crowding in, pressing in, close to the city of their aspirations. Every Greek looked at the Golden City and hoped to possess it. It was at hand, and they toiled in the arid wastes

of Thrace. We travelled through this great, bare, wind-swept, stony plain, which is pinched by the cold of winter and burnt by the summer's pitiless sun. The villages were of mean mud huts with old thatched roofs. For miles there was not a tree, and the only life that showed were a few larks in the dried grass and sometimes a flock of lean sheep. It seemed a poor place to die for except as the high road to the Golden City beyond.

All the Balkans were full of soldiers and bellicose talk. Everywhere there were soldiers, wearing British boots and American uniforms. In Sofia the streets were full of troops, said to be there to deal with the unruly remnants of Wrangel's army; but it was a town of ruin and desolation, streets in holes, houses fallen down and everywhere despair.

In Servia they were full of energy. They talked of the revenge that they still hoped to take from Hungary and the wars that they must fight for Salonika and for a port on the Adriatic. On their maps Fiume had a red circle round it to denote "danger." In Belgrade there were soldiers again. Everywhere it seemed that, before they were well free of the World War, these people were preparing to begin a dozen dog-scraps. An American looked out of the window as we raced up the broad plain by the Danube into Hungary.

"We did well," he said, "to cut free of all this. You'd better follow suit quickly in England. There is one piece of hope. From South Russia to the Atlantic this year's corn crop is good."

We came to Buda-Pest. I was glad to have left the Balkans far behind us. There was no laughter in them,

nor the joy of living nor the knowledge of the clean good things of life. The people were as dry and rugged as their land. Over them all still lay the remnants of the blight of the Turks. I realized it in a thousand ways. These countries reminded me of trees submerged under a long winter's flood. When the flood has gone, and before spring comes to call out new shoots, the trees are covered with mud and refuse that become dry and unsightly.

Buda-Pest lay quiet in the sunlight. Its traffic of carts ran on rubber-tired wheels upon asphalt roads. The sweat and tired eyes, the acid rough food and squalor of life was behind me. Sir Thomas Hohler, the Minister, gave me refuge in his Legation and there I found suddenly a cool miles-deep bed in which to sleep, soft food, wines of the gods, pictures, carpets, porcelain and books in shaded rooms. Life was good.

In Buda-Pest was the stillness and beauty of great stone cathedrals and the splendour of wide streets and stately houses. Far behind me was the carrion and garbage, the stale smell of evil and misery, that is thick in Constantinople. The atmosphere of the Balkans, in which coarse primitive animal conditions with murder and war and terribleness are the normal aspect of life, was gone.

Here security and hope looking forward, and peace were ingrained in the habits of the people. They had been misused by Bela Kun and his foul Bolsheviki. They had struck back in wild reaction and suffered the horrors of revolution and civil war. But these things were terrors that had been forced on them. They were a quiet people wanting a monarchy. They were glad to be held steady for the minute by one strong

man, Admiral Horthy, the Regent. They understood, they wanted, they were used to peace and prosperity. Left alone, they would quickly have put their affairs in order, but on their frontiers sat the snarling states of the Balkans, combined into the Little Entente, determined that the Hungarians should not succeed.

The Legation looked down over the Danube as it twisted under great bridges, and out across Pest into unlimited miles of corn-fields that faded into the distance like a sea. They were working in Buda-Pest and there was hope. To me looking down over that wonderful expanse of city and corn land—it seemed incredible that those lazy, inefficient useless Turks, that I knew, should have ruled as far as this. They had swept forward in blood and terribleness. They had been driven back in blood and terribleness and left behind them only a few smoking ruins. This was the frontier to which the East had swept up over the West. Then the West had swept back half across Asia, and at the minute the two great forces faced each other.

I caught the train to Vienna and so came to the "City of Gilded Despair." My life among the Turks had made me critical of Europe. I wondered now what Europe had to offer. In Vienna I found a vivid indictment of our civilization. There was all that a man could want and all that, when he talked of progress, he praised. There was wonderful opera and exquisite music. There were cabarets—where they kept iron curtains on the windows to hide the luxuries from the hungry crowd—in which they served wild strawberries in champagne and beautiful women danced exotic dances.

There were pictures by Rubens in the Academy and furs and gold watches in the shops. A man might telephone to Buda Pest, or telegraph to London or fly to Warsaw, or drive down great noble streets in a luxurious limousine. And the people were starving. Six hundred years before our civilization had taken a turning into a blind alley. Now its delicately balanced mechanism had broken down. The people were starving. The night women were fierce. The clerks and the shop assistants white-faced crept to the cafés in the lunch hour and lolled over a cup of coffee. They were all bones and flabby flesh, slack and listless with under-feeding. The workmen were wild beasts, for they were not sure of their next meal. Everywhere hunger showed out like a skull beneath a fine hat or the bones of a skeleton dressed in a silken gown. Our civilization had produced the complicated mechanisms of the taxi and of democratic rule and had failed to keep away hunger and despair. On the frontier, determined that Austria, now all head and no body, should not struggle out of the slough of despair, sat Italy snarling. I wondered no more that the East refused the civilization of Europe.

In an express train we raced through Germany and so into Belgium. We crossed a still summer's sea and ran into Dover Harbour on a late June day. When I came to London they were carrying Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson down to St. Paul's. England had already forgotten the Great War. It did not realize from what this great soldier, and those with him, had saved it. In the country the lazy cattle chewed the cud in quiet, neat fields. The people went peacefully to work and

home to clean cottages. Everywhere there was money. There were rows of cars in the London streets. The cinemas and theatres were full. The people did not realize the boons of stability and those of security and peace. One hour in the fear of defencelessness in Turkey ; one day in the uncertainty of Bulgaria or the misery of Vienna, and they would have understood. For defeat in the Great War would have meant that England would have been a little starving island in the North Sea, if obstinate, blockaded by the enemy's fleet, and full of murder, bloodshed and revolution. It is good to forget evil, but foolish to forget the evil that can come.

It was my first summer in England for many years. With a pang of thanksgiving I was glad that I had escaped to see it. The grumblers left me unmoved. They could not appreciate England, nor its clean grass lawns and welcome pleasant sun. In Turkey and all the East the people are stale with tired bodies, for they live in lands that are stale and tired. They wake to the dry sun in the morning no fresher than they went to sleep. They do not know the kick and pulse of life. Despite the songs of their poets they have no scents like those of English roses. I would rather hear one blackbird singing in a cool English garden than all the nightingales of Alemdar and Ispahan under the white moon.

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Partly through friends and partly personally I delivered the Sultan's message. It had no more effect than a small wave on a concrete bastion. The great men

listened politely, were interested and returned to their folly as before. The Foreign Office was still short-circuited and Lord Curzon appeared to acquiesce without agreeing. The Turkish Nationalists sent Ali Fethi Bey to London to come to some terms, but he was turned away. Damad Ferid Pasha arrived, but met with no encouragement.

Then suddenly events began to move. The Greeks, feeling the strain and also recognizing that the Allies were in a blind-alley, prepared to march on Constantinople. On the 28th of July they were warned back by Sir Charles Harington, the Allied Commander-in-Chief in Turkey, and went no further. In August Mr. Lloyd George made a speech at Manchester, extolling the virtues of the Greeks and calling for a conference to bring the deadlock to an end. In this speech he made some reference to the Sultan as the real Government of Turkey. That fact had at last and too late penetrated to his brain. The Turks, wishing to be in a strong position for such a conference, played for delay, and then attacked the Greeks. Their plans were well laid. They feinted at Eski Shekir, and burst through with weight of numbers at Afion-Kara-Hissar. To the surprise of every one, including the Turks, the Greek troops went on strike and marched away. Harassed by the Turks on every side and neglected by their own officers, in an incredibly short space of time they were pushed out of Anatolia. The Turks marched into Smyrna, and Brusa, and up towards Chanak, and on to the frontier of the Ismid Peninsula. The whole position was changed, as I hurried back to Constantinople.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### The Greek Defeat, the Chanak Crisis, and the Mudania Conference, 1922

**A**S a snail that has suddenly had its shell knocked away, the Allies in the Neutral Zone found themselves naked and unprotected, facing the victorious Turks. Smyrna had been taken on the 10th of September and burnt to the ground, and its rich Christian merchants ruined and driven out.

A glance at the map showed at once what had happened and where lay the zones of danger. The Greek troops had gone on strike. Here and there a few had turned and done heavy damage to the Turks. By phenomenal marching they had extracted themselves from contact with the enemy, and reached their bases on the shore. They had taken ship to Thrace and so put the sea between them and the Turks. Now they were reforming in Thrace on the Maritza river. Between the Allies and the Turks the protecting screen was gone. The position had reversed, for the Allies had become the buffer between the enemies.

The Greeks had moved with an amazing rapidity. The Turkish cavalry had done its best, but the main force had failed to keep contact. They found the enemy

gone. Between them was the broad sea. One bridge across remained and that was formed by the area from the Bosphorus through Constantinople to the Dardanelles. This was the neutral zone, and the bridge was held by the Allies.

Of this bridge the key-point was Chanak. It was the door to Adrianople, and its possession outflanked and threatened the communications both by land and sea of the small Allied force that held Constantinople. The Turks, somewhat taken aback at their own success and at the extraordinary disappearance of the Greeks, began to form up and concentrate towards the Allied neutral zone. General Harington, seeing the danger, organized a mobile force of all the Allies and hoped with this and a show of Allied flags on the neutral frontier to keep back the Turks.

With instinctive good strategy the Turks came hurrying along, looking for their enemy before he could reform and reorganize. They hoped to catch him still moving and chase him down to Athens.

Reports showed that the second Turkish Army of 40,000 men was moving on to Chanak. The French and Italians began to grow nervous. On the 22nd of September they removed their flags from the frontier and retired their forces. That culminating act of stupidity was due to the politicians in Paris and Rome. The commanders on the spot, both as honourable men and soldiers, had no part in it. France and Italy paid in humiliation a heavy price for their folly.

Alone the British stood facing the storm. Encouraged by the rift in the Entente, and by French observers

with their army, the Turks desired to discover if the British Empire would stand its ground and, if necessary, fight. On the morning of the 23rd of September they sent 1,100 cavalry across the neutral frontier.

The British scouts could see away in the distance the dust of columns of infantry marching. Chanak was covered by good trenches and barbed wire, except for a gap on one flank. It was held by three thousand well-equipped infantry with artillery. A handful of cavalry and mounted infantry acted as feelers. There were aeroplanes in good numbers able to maintain complete air superiority. Behind in the Dardanelles lay a great armada of cruisers and destroyers, led by four huge battleships. Conscious of its strength, this fleet was eager to fight.

It was a crucial moment. The stakes were large. To allow the Turks to cross over was to bring war into the Balkans. It was placing a lighted faggot among barrels of gunpowder. Bolshevik Russia might invade Bessarabia. The quarrel of Italy and Servia in Albania might come to a head. Every country was sore and at loggerheads with its neighbours. There were a thousand complications and a thousand people who strove for war. There was imminent danger that the flame might spread across Europe and light another great war of destruction. On the other hand, to forbid the Turks to cross might bring the British Empire into direct hostile conflict with the Turks, and produce a similar result.

Despite all the folly of his previous policies, in a great decision that marked him as a great man, Mr. Lloyd George decided to hold back the Turks even at

the cost of war. He realized the stakes at issue. He also realized the sound method of obtaining success. He showed his teeth. He gave orders to fight. He called to the Empire to stand up, to protect its honour and its interests. With that magnificent decision Mr. Lloyd George threw away office and his own career.

From Malta and Gibraltar and Egypt troops were hurried. In Australia and England crowds of men demanded to be enlisted. A guards brigade, squadrons of aeroplanes, artillery and marines were shipped post-haste. The Navy gave its cordial assent and enthusiastic assistance. Admiral Beatty was prepared to blow everybody and everything offensive sky-high and make the transit of the Bosphorus and the Straits, even for a rowing-boat, impossible. In Chanak the local commanders were full of belief in success and the troops had a placid contempt for the Turks, who had never yet turned British troops out of trenches.

The Turks were hesitating. They were poor troops, short of ammunition and necessities. Their bases were far away and the lines of communication inefficient. They were bluffing. Mr. Lloyd George played bluff against bluff, and kept war only as a last weapon to save the Empire from dishonour. His bluff was called, not by the enemy, but by the Allies and by Englishmen. The French assured the Turks that the British would give way. The English papers shouted for peace at all costs, and their correspondents, ignorant of the facts, howled with despair. The newspaper-owners carried their private quarrels shamelessly into international politics. The Labour Members of Parliament protested, but,

being more loyal than the newspaper-owners, went to Downing Street and came away under a pledge of silence. Englishmen went to Angora to tell the Turks that the people of England would not fight. Politicians saw a chance to break up the Coalition Government and throw Mr. Lloyd George into the street.

Bluff demanded quick decisive action and a show of force. Those who knew the Turks realized that a challenge would not be taken up, and that a show of force was the front door to a good peace. Such a show had to be made alone. Lord Curzon was in Paris striving for allied unity, but the French had behind them the treaty made by M. Franklin-Bouillon at Angora. They wanted safety on the Syrian front. They knew that if the British fought at Chanak, they must face French rifles and ammunition, French "seventy-fives" and French aeroplanes supplied to the Turks by the French Government. If further proof of their attitude was required, it only needed to recall the French ship that was stopped as it sailed down the Golden Horn in the first week of January 1922. It was laden with ammunition and stores for the Turks in Anatolia and its hold-up by the British caused a diplomatic incident. The French looked on the success of the Turks as the success of their protégés, who would listen to them.

On the 25th of September Colonel Shuttleworth, the commander at Chanak, organized and sent out a strong mobile column. His sanguine personality and optimistic courage inspired his whole force. Without nerves he faced the possibility of a Turkish assault in the placid knowledge of the value of his troops.

But the decision lay not with the Home Government nor with the Chanak commander, but with Lieut.-General Sir Charles Harington, the Allied Commander-in-Chief. He knew nothing of the mentality of the Turks. He believed that if the Turk was treated as a gentleman he would behave as one. He did not take the advice of the experts in the Embassy and those on his staff, who tried to disabuse his mind of this. He recalled the mobile column. He sent kindly telegrams of protest to Mustapha Kemal and received in return brusque replies. He merely convinced the Turkish command that they held the whip hand.

The moment for action passed. All who had a knowledge of the Turks were convinced that if it had been taken, it would have been the right solution. The Turkish command would have withdrawn the cavalry and apologized and been ready to come to terms of peace. There was a risk. It needed a great soul to take that risk. The Empire has been built by such great souls. General Harington's telegrams of protest only revealed our weakness. Bluff became valueless. Strength slithered down into weak diplomacy unbacked by force.

The Turks began to realize how matters stood. They had no desire to fight the British Empire. They decided on a manœuvre of "peaceful penetration." With arms reversed and such like tricks they advanced right up to and in some cases through the British lines. To deal with such a manœuvre demanded decision and character, and these were lacking. It was a great military victory. By a direct assault costing many thousands of lives the

Turks might have perhaps attained the same result. Their manœuvre was pre-eminently successful, for without loss of men or prestige or material, they made the British position in Chanak untenable, gained the key to the situation, and won a decision as effective as the key battle of a campaign. As a military manœuvre it should interest future historians.

In Constantinople I found the source of the trouble, for there was a sense of insecurity. The Commander-in-Chief was as it were in the firing-line, and that is always unsound. The military dispositions were bad. A great town can only be held by employing the minimum number of troops as guards and to hold special positions, and by concentrating the main body in a handy position and handy formation outside ready for quick action. The Allied garrison was scattered in depots and barracks all over the intricate town and separated by narrow alleys and areas of wooden houses easily set alight. Officers lived in private quarters often in back streets and could not be found at a moment's notice. There were constant scares of internal troubles and these at times grew into panic. The military intelligence was often faulty.

On the Ismidt side the city was exposed, and the Turks had already begun to advance across the neutral frontier. The few British troops there were ordered to stop them but not to open fire. In such an atmosphere the commander and his staff made their decisions and issued their orders.

The Turks, however, were still unsure. They were afraid of the traditional colossus of Britain. They hesitated to step into some clever trap laid by British

diplomats. They knew that Mr. Lloyd George was prepared to fight. They wished to avoid fighting anyone but the Greeks. They had little to lose by accepting, and on the 2nd of October they agreed to a conference at Mudania.

There for nine days Sir Charles Harington steered through the shoals of Allied disagreement and Turkish arrogance. His patience had been treated as weakness and had increased the obstinacy of the Turks. He now had orders not to use force without the co-operation of the other Allies and to the end the Allied quarrels continued.

By careful diplomacy and unlimited patience Sir Charles Harington kept the delegates together and persuaded Ismet Pasha, the Turkish representative, to sign the Convention. In the grey light before dawn on the 11th of October the representatives of all Europe stood waiting restless and tired after hours of strain, eager to light the first cigarette. Ismet Pasha sat pondering. He represented a small army of under-fed and under-equipped troops and a bankrupt State. The Civilized World waited and held its breath while he pondered deliberately. Then he signed. The force that decided his signature was the knowledge that he had gained all he could hope to gain by bargaining, and that at 5 a.m. that morning, if he was still obdurate, an ultimatum was to be presented.

Mudania for the minute saved the situation. It retrieved at a grievous cost some of the ground lost at Chanak. As soon as it was decided to avoid the use of bluff and force it was the only road out of an impasse.

It suited the politicians in England, for it formed the last lever with which to throw out Mr. Lloyd George. To all the enemies of the Coalition, whether politicians or newspaper-owners, the makers of the Mudania Convention were heroes and to be praised.

But the Turks had been, and were, afraid to fight the British. Being among them, I saw it each day. They walked on tip-toe while the negotiations were in progress. When it was signed they sighed openly with relief that Turkey was saved from final destruction.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Turkish Success from Mudania to the Lausanne Conference

THE Mudania Convention was the child of the Armistice. It was the lack of decision, the procrastination that hoped to solve difficulties by delay, the errors or absence of policy, and the discord in the Entente, that produced it.

It ended the Armistice. Most of the events that followed were its direct results. Both sides agreed to meet and come to terms of peace as soon as possible. The Allies disowned the Greeks and agreed to eject them from Eastern Thrace and hand over the country to the Turks, and to evacuate Turkey themselves as soon as peace was signed. They promised to make no further military movement, but left to the Turks liberty of action outside the neutral zone.

In itself the convention was final and the Lausanne Treaty, that followed it, was its natural consequence. The Allies did not use, and then threw away the pawns in their possession with which they might have bargained. A large percentage of the Greek troops on the Maritza front were undefeated. Those who came from Anatolia were organizing. Given permission, within a few

hours, they would have been in Constantinople by the side of the British. To eject them again would have been perhaps beyond the power of the Turks; for shrewd observers on the spot at that time consistently reported that the Turkish troops were of little value. Among the Christian population of the town some thousands of fighting men could have been enlisted. These threats were never used at Mudania.

By chasing the Greeks away out of Eastern Thrace Sir Charles Harington threw away a pawn of maximum value. He gave up the only weapon that remained and he made the continuation of the military occupation of Constantinople by the Allies impossible. With the Turks in Thrace the land lines of communication were cut and the city exposed to direct assault at any minute. It was the second great bloodless victory that the Turks had won by a little bluff, and by their inherent ability to sum up the character of their opponent.

Mudania was like the revival of an old play in which the characters have forgotten the parts they used to act. The Great War and the Entente were things of the past. The thinking in terms of the World was gone. Each nation had settled back into its own individuality and was looking to its own interests. Suddenly the Mudania Conference demanded the co-operation of the Entente. It showed to the enemy that the Entente was dead, and that all the old fierce rivalries were once more alive, ready to be used and schemed with. It made it clear, moreover, that neither together nor individually would the Allies fight the Turks. It proclaimed the policy of peace at any price. In the subsequent history

the outstanding feature was the presence in the field of some 100,000 ragged Turkish troops menacing all the might of Europe.

Though much had been lost at Mudania, the Allies still held certain assets and might have extricated themselves with some show of dignity and honour. But after Mudania the Allied Military Command was obsessed with the determination to avoid war at all costs, and with a belief that the Turks were powerful and, if opposed, would attack. As a result the enemy gained the impression that there was a panic. They intercepted urgent telegrams insistently calling attention to the dangers of the situation. They saw fantastic plots unearthed that were crude fabrications. They knew of schemes for an evacuation to be carried out so hurriedly that it would resemble a flight.

When the Commander-in-Chief took over from Sir George Milne he had the whole life of the city and the neutral area, in every detail, under his control. At Mudania he agreed to evacuate on the conclusion of peace. There remained therefore only two lines of policy, either to hold the city and the area firmly until the date of evacuation and then let the Turks march in with flags flying and bands playing and risk the chances of incendiarism and massacre, or to hand over gradually and so avoid the shock.

Partly deliberately, partly by force of circumstances, the second policy was adopted. The Allies had ejected the Greeks from Eastern Thrace. On the 21st of October Rafet Pasha, with some gendarmes, was to pass through Constantinople on his way to take over. He remained

in the city. His activities met with no opposition. It was never realized that all that was needed was a little firmness which is a stronger weapon than pathetic weakness cloaked as tact.

Weakness cannot long be hidden. The Turks began to realize that they had the British at a disadvantage. They became arrogant and made demands. As they received all they demanded, they took more. Contrary to the convention they organized a force in Eastern Thrace. They pushed in on the Ismidt front. They had been ready to work in conjunction with the Allies. Now they demanded the abolition of the military controls and this was done almost hurriedly. The censorship of the newspapers and telegrams—which formed the main source of military information—was discontinued. The control of the gendarmerie and police and the passports was given up. The customs and quays were handed back.

On one occasion the Turks chased Italian gendarmes off a ship, while they were doing control work. On another they refused to recognize British visas and arrested Armenians employed by the Allies. On yet another they censored the Commander-in-Chief's speech, refused to hand over out of the customs a cup he had bought as a boxing trophy, and inserted bitter articles against the Allies in the newspapers. Nationalists were drilled in the neutral area. Allied troops were molested and their safety threatened. Against these and similar offences the only action taken was in the form of gentle protests. When junior officers showed what could be done with a little determination they were hurriedly

ordered to withdraw. The pride of England and her prestige was humbled, without cause, as it has never been humbled before.

The Turks were amazed. They treated me as a friend and with this doubtful privilege I heard many home truths. Their dislike I could understand and even appreciate. Now they developed a contempt which I found hard to bear.

"Mustapha Kemal," they said, "and his men were in the beginning in a far worse position than you are. Were they afraid? They have won through."

Seeing his chance, Rafet Pasha schemed to bring the effective occupation to an end. Full details of his plan were in the hands of the Sultan's Government and British head-quarters on the 25th of October. The following day the Grand Vizier sent for Sami Bey, the Governor of Skutari. He wished to make him Chief of Police with full power to clear up the situation and prevent the carrying out of the plot. The appointment of Sami Bey was vetoed by the British military authorities. With its hands so tied, the Sultan's Government was powerless.

On the 5th of November Rafet Pasha effected a bloodless *coup d'état*. The Sultan's Government ceased to exist. Constantinople became a province under Angora. The Sultanate was abolished and the Sultan threatened. At this late hour His Majesty suddenly showed a stubborn courage. He stood his ground and refused to abdicate.

It was common knowledge that, following this *coup d'état*, the High Commissioners, considering that the

Allied interests were at stake, demanded the proclamation of a state of siege, and that on the grounds that it would endanger the safety of the force the military authorities refused. The British Embassy staff knew the Turk well. They had no delusions as to his gentlemanly qualities. They knew that patience and kindness would be interpreted as fear and so lead to arrogance and opposition, while strength was the high road to peace. They showed no panic. They stood firm and courageous, but unable to enforce their views. The military leaders had become the diplomats.

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I returned to Skutari to find all my work undone and the gendarmes dazed. The officers were non-committal. The men tried gamely to be loyal. In the north the Nationalists had come in looting and raping. In the south the Greek villages were empty, and the villagers had collected their goods and fled for safety. Once more fear and hatred and murder were the dominant and ruling forces.

The Turkish villagers were silent, but the townsfolk had begun to talk crude Bolshevism. Everywhere I met armed Nationalists. The new nation that had been born across the frontier, of hatred and despair, began to flood into my area. Once more there was the old danger. The Turks, sheep-like, were being driven by vigorous leaders, and there was no public opinion to act as a drag. The wild undigested fancies of a few men in Angora were given as orders and carried out implicitly without understanding.

The people neither understood nor sympathized. A night of rejoicing was ordered to follow the success of the *coup d'état* and the end of the old régime. A pale white moon lit the streets of Skutari. The riff-raff had been formed into processions. With torches and the beating of drums they marched round shouting and singing.

"For what are you shouting?" I called to the leaders of one procession—a number of porters with whom I talked often on the shore.

"Long life for Ghazi Mustapha Kemal!" they cried back.

"Give a shout for me," I replied.

"Certainly," they said, and gave me many lusty cheers and then marched away. The police had told them to rejoice.

For the rest the people were frightened. They walked softly on tip-toe, not understanding the destruction of the Sultanate nor their own position. Few went into the streets and many came to my house to hear what I had to say. Even the townsfolk reminded me of the story, as it is told in the Stambul bazaars, of the men of Turkestan.

Once there came a ship loaded with men of Turkestan. It lay in anchorage below the Tower of Leander. The passengers sat placidly on the deck in rows. The boatmen called to them to come ashore, but they sat unmoved like images. In despair, one boatman climbed on board. He caught the nearest passenger by the long sleeves of his Turkestani coat, tied them together and dragged the wearer forcibly into his boat. Where-

upon all the rest rose gravely in a mass and followed their brother ; and the boatman with his craft and many of the men of Turkestan were sunk in the swift Bosphorus current. So the Turks now played gravely the game of " follow my leader."

With their opponents held down by the Allies, the Nationalists had carried out a great revolution. Constantinople, the royal city of Byzantium, the imperial capital of the Osmanli, was now only a subordinate area in the Angora Government. It was hard to appreciate the new thing that had happened. I climbed the hills beyond my house above the palace of Beyler Bey, where Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan, had been imprisoned, and where he had died. It was the Friday after the *coup d'état*. Below me lay the Bosphorus, a strip of grey sea crowded with battleships at anchor. There were British battleships that looked like long, lean, beautiful wild beasts, eager and crouching. There were dirty, bedraggled French men-of-war with the day's washing hung out half-way up to the mast-heads. There were ugly Italian craft and gaunt, unwieldy American destroyers tied in pairs. All the navies of the world lay there in force.

Far away in the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent a priest cried, and from every minaret the *muezzins* caught the sound and called the call to prayer. In the palace ragged soldiers were cooking. A British aeroplane throbbed out of nothing and slid away into space. From across the Bosphorus came up the live murmur of the great city and above it stood out the royal palace and its *seraglio* surrounded by double walls.

It was the hour for the *Selamlık*, when the Sultan and the Khalif, as his ancestors had before him throughout the centuries, went to public prayer and showed himself as the Defender of the Faithful and the Monarch of the World. To-day, there was to be no *Selamlık* for there was no Sultan and the Khalif had been deposed. Below lay the navies of the world, and behind them the great nations searching for order and peace out of the chaos left by war. In the palace sat the last of a great race and the ruler of a broken empire. Behind me, across Anatolia, born in the agony of death, striving to put away from it the corruption of its fathers, was a new nation. It was ragged and unkempt. Its future was doubtful. It had hurled back the Greeks, who had come as the agents of Europe and as Christian crusaders. It had forced Europe to its knees. It had torn up its own empire and ripped away its own traditions. It was led by men full of ideas so new as to be primitive, who hurried the complacent people into the steep paths of experiments that had taken Europe a thousand years to try.

Far away beyond the palace in a pearl haze lay the Balkans full of new nations that hated the Turks. The head of the Bosphorus was hidden by a bank of fog, dark, lowering and black in the morning light. Wisps of fog tore out and came down the Bosphorus. Behind the fog lay Russia, impotent for the minute, but at heart as insatiable as ever. Behind that fog and the pearl haze of the Balkans lay the future.

The Lausanne Conference had started and events had played once more for the Turks. On the 20th of October



with a whoop of joy the politicians had broken up the Coalition Government and ejected Mr. Lloyd George. Lord Curzon alone had weathered the storm, but he had little reason to be proud of this. Far back in 1919 he had informed the Italian Ambassador that he had had no hand in the sending of the Greeks to Smyrna and looked on it as a cardinal error. In September 1922 he denied all knowledge of the Cabinet's appeal to the Empire to stand up to the Turks at Chanak. Between those dates he was continuously Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He allowed the Foreign Office, with its wealth of knowledge and precedent, to be short-circuited. He saw the Empire committed to policies that he knew were wrong and that involved the security of the world and of future generations. Mr. Lloyd George may have been ignorant, but Lord Curzon was aware of the errors. Pregnant with his own pomposity and the idea of his own ability and of his own stupendous indispensability, he remained in office, and yet influenced the situation but little. Then when Mr. Lloyd George fell, Lord Curzon proclaimed that he had never agreed with his chief, and that now he would put right what he had always known to be wrong. Mr. Bonar Law had become Prime Minister. He was preaching "Tranquillity," and that the health of the world depended on keeping the patient quiet, and not on vigorous exercise or operations.

The Sultan Wahad-ed-Din had left Turkey on a British battleship, and Abdul Medjed had been created an emasculated edition of a Khalif. The opposition in Turkey had ceased to exist and Angora was supreme.

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I saw that the end was near. By December 1922 the Turks were once more in complete control. The occupation had come to an end. The Allied troops had become no more than unwelcome guests and even, as their enemies said, hostages.

All my soul revolted against the crawling to this Pasha and to that Pasha. The Turks were back thinking in the arrogant days of Suleiman the Magnificent. When down and under, they are courteous and charming, though somewhat fatuous, old gentlemen; but when up they are evil devils out of hell. My pride hated to see the British Empire, without cause, dragged gratuitously in the mud, while all Asia watched.

These sentiments were shared by the regimental officers and the soldiers, by the sailors and airmen, and the Embassy staff. Throughout they had stood self-restrained, courageous and unmoved, and they made no pretence that they enjoyed eating mud. In Constantinople are many British who are British because they have passports. They have not been given passports because they are British; but even these combined with the Allied civilians in condemning the line of policy adopted by the military command. Never in all this world has the stupendous power of weakness been so dramatically illustrated.

Too late the French and Italians realized their errors. Now they began to complain.

"You must always," said the Italian Military Attaché to me, "keep the red-hot poker close to the nose of the Turkish beast." He had forgotten the arms that Italy

had shipped to Adana and Konia for the Turks and the Italian retirement from Chanak.

For me the position had grown impossible. Though the Turks treated me well, the area was full of armed Nationalists who did not know me. I took a last journey round my land. I saw the Black Sea once more in the winter's wind. I rode through Alemdar forest dripping in a light fog under a pale sun, where stray autumn leaves sailed down and fell with a fairy crash in the silent woods. I saw the empty dishevelled villages in the open plain. I climbed once more the mountain of Keish Dag and down the broken road with Hadji Ramazan behind me. The road was full of holes and I had planned to mend it in the next spring.

We topped the last rise. With despair in my heart I looked back to where the white road twisted away into the horizon and the first trees of Alemdar showed black against the sky-line. Murder and desolation lay across all this land once more. I had said good-bye to my people and they might miss me. To avoid useless regret I turned quickly this page of life and climbed down into Europe and the well-known streets of the foreign city.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### The Lausanne Conference and the Recognition of Turkey

THE Turks were now in full control of all the neutral area. I found the new nation like a child that is not sure of its feet, endeavouring to walk alone and grasping suddenly at new ideas. The ordinary routine of life was full of new facts and new theories.

The Lausanne Conference had begun on the 20th of November 1922, in circumstances that presented little hope of success.

The Turks had gone to Lausanne truculent in the knowledge of their new-found strength. As the weakness of the Allied Command in Constantinople and the arguments of their opponents showed to them that they held the whip-hand, they grew more obstinate. They mistrusted the Allies. The exploitation of the Ottoman Empire, the Capitulations, the financial controls, the shameless annexation of sections of their land, the Treaty of Sèvres and the Tripartite Agreement had handed down to them an heritage of mistrust.

They hated the Allies. The maladministration, the assistance given to their Christian subjects, the inter-

ference in their private quarrels during the Allied occupation had filled them with hatred. All the brutalities, the raping of women and the devastations, committed by the Greek troops, were scored up against the British.

Finally, they went to Lausanne filled with a profound contempt for the Allies. They realized now that the Allied Delegates had no force behind them. They understood the meaning of the lack of firm grip shown in Constantinople. They began to wonder why they had been bluffed into signing at Mudania and to boast that they might, with ease, have marched on to Athens, and even Vienna.

They sat down at the Conference table haughty and conscious that their strength was not based on some diplomatic move, but on an army. But they sat down cautiously and with suspicion. They feared the guile of the British diplomats. They were always looking for catches and snares. They distrusted the craftiness and skill of their opponents.

Facing them across the Conference table was the British delegation. It dominated the Entente. It stood alone as it had at Chanak. Some days before the Conference Lord Curzon had met M. Poincaré and Signor Mussolini, and they had agreed on some common action. As soon as the Conference began, the French promises proved to be valueless. In the French delegation were M. Barrère, who stood by the Entente, and M. Bompard, who stood for French interests alone and cared not at all for the general good. On the 23rd of January 1923 M. Barrère retired for reasons of health, and henceforth

France looked to her own individual interests exclusively. She was intent on protecting Syria. She was determined to keep as much of her privileged position in Turkey as possible. She wanted the money that she had invested in the Ottoman Empire. She was depressed to find that her protégés, when successful, treated her with scant courtesy. Throughout the Conference she followed her own line. It led her one day on to the side of the Turks and the next on to the side of the Allies. She effectually ruined her own interests and earned the dislike of both sides.

The British delegation was prepared to agree to liberal terms, but it announced that it came as one of the victors of the Great War to impose peace. The Turks maintained that by defeating the Greeks they were the victors. The outstanding fact remained that the Turks had force and were prepared to use it, while the Allied representatives were impotent. The British refused to strip the situation to its bare realities and deal with it accordingly.

The British delegation was remarkable for the hostility of many of its members to the Turks as a whole or to the Nationalists. The military member was known for his open championing of the Greeks at the Paris Conference and later. The experts from the Constantinople Embassy had stood by the late Sultan and encouraged him to resist the Nationalists. Civil war rouses fierce hatred, but the hatred against the foreigner who backs one side in such a struggle is fiercer still. The President of the delegation, Lord Curzon, was known to the Turks as the henchman of Mr. Lloyd George. That he dis-

claimed responsibility for the policy of his late leader was to them only a move in the political game. They looked on him as the man who had agreed to their dismemberment during the war, who had tried to destroy Turkey by the Treaty of Sèvres, and who had endeavoured by the scandalous Tripartite Agreement to divide Anatolia up among the Allies. Now, having failed, he came hurrying, holding out across the Conference table the olive branch of peace and the hand of friendship. Such a delegation might have made a good peace with Greece or forced a good peace on a defeated Turkey. But with the victorious, overweening and suspicious Turk it could not hope to make any peace but one of humiliation.

To follow the intricate and dreary negotiations of the Conference would be a weariness of the flesh. All the variegated texture of the thousands of international agreements that had made the pattern of the old Ottoman Empire was laboriously unravelled and each Power tried to save what it could. The Turks knew exactly what they wanted. They were determined to be free. They refused to allow the reimposition of any control, and with all the pawns in their hands they stood firm.

Automatically Lord Curzon became the "Prince of Carpet-Buyers." He refused each Turkish demand. He bargained through long weary weeks, losing nearly all, gaining sometimes a little, to find that within the next few days the Turks had decided not to give way there also. Any assets he might have had, with which to bargain, were thrown away by the flabbiness of the Allied Command in Constantinople. Finally he played

the last move of the vendor tourist and in anger left the Conference shop. He waited in Lausanne station hoping that Ismet Pasha, the merchant, would follow and accept. But Ismet Pasha did not come, and Lord Curzon left Lausanne in failure. He had overlooked the fact that the "Merchant" knew, as all the world did, that he had nothing with which to buy carpets. As Colonel the Hon. Aubrey Herbert once said in the House of Commons: "Lord Curzon treated the Turks as he often treats us—like naughty schoolboys—and we neither of us like it."

The second conference opened a few days later, and the regular diplomatists and experts set to work to push the peace through to its logical conclusion. By May they were little farther. Of the political clauses fourteen out of twenty-eight had been reopened. Of the financial clauses twenty-three out of twenty-five had to be revised. Forty-five of the clauses of the economic convention were in the air. Of the hundred and sixty articles of the treaty ninety-two were still undecided. The conventions attached were in a similar state.

At sixes and sevens among themselves the Allies gave back step by step to the Turkish demands. Hopes of American financial aid at times incited the Turks to new obstinacy, just when some vital point had been won. Here and there influential Americans tried to involve their unwilling Government in commitments in Turkey. The active hostility of Admiral Bristol, the American High Commissioner, who appeared to think that his country's interests were suffering, did not assist in the clearing up of the intricate and delicate situation.

Through all the summer of 1923 the delegates haggled and quarrelled until in late July the Turks had obtained ninety per cent. of their demands, and with a sigh of relief the peace was signed and the delegates hurried away. In the face of all Asia watching, Europe had been humbled by Turkish evasion, obstruction and defiance ; and all across the world enemies made a note of these things.

One incident occurred that showed to what a state the might of Europe had sunk. Early in the summer M. Venizelos had been called to look to Greek interests. He realized the deadlock in the Conference and proposed to make a separate and good treaty with the Turks and to demobilize at once. The Allies sternly forbade this and, while France haggled for her money and England held fast for barren Mosul, Greece had to wait fully armed and bankrupt. She was the only force at the disposal of the Allies. However much they might have disagreed with Mr. Lloyd George, all the Allies were once more utilizing the Greeks for their own ends.

The bargaining was at an end. On the 24th of July 1923 the peace was signed. From the point of view of the victors of the Great War it was a humiliating peace, but it marked an epoch in history. The Turks had forced the Allies, against their wishes, to recognize facts. It legalized much that already existed. It contained few great ideals or sentimental clauses.

It proclaimed the death of the Ottoman Empire and the new divisions into which that monstrous and cumbrous body had already adjusted itself. The vast Arab lands went their own way. Turkish rights in

Cyprus, Libya, Morocco, Tripoli, Tunis, Egypt, and a mass of other places were finally dealt with.

Out of the vast muddle of the old Empire one by one all the nations of the Near East had struggled free and taken up their own individual existence. The last to struggle free and demand recognition was the Turk.

Lausanne recognized the New Turkey, a sovereign independent state with its destinies in its own hands. From the Maritza river, with an enclave to cover Adrianople, across Eastern Thrace to Constantinople and then the whole of Anatolia was to be the extent of Turkey.

The Turks had forced their recognition, at the point of the bayonet, on the unwilling Allies. The controls, the capitulations, the financial restrictions and the special rights of various nations were destroyed.

The treaty was no artificial or theoretical document. It legalized and stabilized already existing facts. As such it had firm foundations. The Great Powers had buttressed up, and had wish to buttress up again, the rotten Ottoman Empire. Now it was gone, and the world was free of its complications that for a century had weighed as heavily on it as an incubus.

In its place were groups of new nations, each untried, inexperienced and facing new problems. Some had been created artificially with European assistance. Among them all the Turks alone had decided on and fought out their own destiny. In the face of fearsome odds they had cast away the corruption of their fathers and forced their recognition on an unwilling world.

## CHAPTER XXX

### New Turkey, 1923

NEW Turkey did not wait for recognition or the end of the Conference, but forthwith set to work to reorganize its life. Events hurried one upon another into existence and were registered at Lausanne and legalized as facts. Constantinople had become of minor importance. The Allied army of occupation, except as an irritant, had ceased to affect the situation. It remained on sufferance and in humiliation until its evacuation on the 2nd of October 1923. But from its point of vantage it was possible to watch the first efforts of the young state.

The gendarmerie commission was at an end. The Allied occupation was a dead thing, and in the new year I was due to leave.

The country to which I had come in 1916 bore little resemblance to that which I left in 1923. The stupendous upheaval of war and revolution had swept away every landmark. It had torn up beliefs and axioms ages old. It had released new forces which as yet gave no indication as to what they would produce. All old fixed conceptions had to be readjusted.

The vast Ottoman Empire was gone, and in its place

many small nations, like half-blind puppies weaned too early from their mother, struggled for life.

The social system of the Turks had collapsed. For economic and other reasons veiled women and harems had disappeared. Freely and unashamed the women had come out into the open. In their power for good and evil lay the future life of Turkey.

The Christian minorities had ceased to exist. Those Christians who had remained in Turkey were to be transported. The rest were in exile or dead. With their acceptance of the ejection of the Greek Patriarch, Meletios IV, the Allies crowned their betrayal of the Ottoman Christians whom they had used and misled. The English bishops and the Federal Council of the Christian Churches of America, representing some 20,000,000 Americans, protested loudly, but left the matter in the hands of God. In this they might have learnt a lesson from Mohammed himself who taught action as well as placid faith. One day he travelled on horseback with a friend and at midday they slept under some trees. When they woke, the friend discovered that his horse was gone.

"But," he said plaintively, "I had placed him in the hands of God."

"So did I," replied Mohammed, "but before I slept, I tied him up securely."

While the religious communities of England and America cried shame, they did nothing; and the Turks cleared their land of undesirables.

The future of new Turkey was problematic. In ejecting the Christians, to obtain national solidarity, the

Turks had driven away their artisan, shopkeeper, and working classes and many of their minor officials. They themselves had shown little ability at the routine of civil life and governmental work which are the driving forces of a state. Among them were serious dissensions that at times flared into violence. They retained the potentially rich land of Anatolia, but with a slender population that appeared to have been smitten with sterility. Impotent for the minute but watching them closely were many enemies, and near at hand was Russia, the colossus of the future that would demand a gateway by the Dardanelles into the outer-world. Italy had kept the island of Castellorizo and her ambitions in South Anatolia. Servia aspired to greatness. All the external safeguards of Turkey were gone. The old game of playing nation against nation was finished. The country was bankrupt, and capital was afraid to come without capitulations.

Triumphant amid a mass of ruins Turkey stood, for the first time in all its history, a homogeneous nation. Born at the occupation at Smyrna, it had been bred in the hard school of war. Now it stood quite alone. Whether it could become fat, compact and efficient, capable of regulating its own internal life and resisting outside pressure and attack, was a problem that lay hidden in a misty future.

I searched diligently among the Turks for the principles on which they were organizing. Despair and a war of self-preservation had given them a strange new virility and new ambitions. But they seemed to be driven more by the sudden kick of hatred than the smooth-

running energy of new life. From the West they had borrowed the idea of *Nationality* as based on a community of blood, religion, language and interest. They had chosen from other nations various definite methods of government such as the secularization of all departments, the separation of religion and state, cabinet responsibility, parliament and general suffrage. But they had borrowed nothing from the West in ideas. They took only the practical results and refused the inspiration, the ideals and the guidance of Europe. Whereas in the revolution of 1908 they turned to the West for salvation, now they turned Eastwards and proudly proclaimed themselves to be of the East.

The Turks had shown themselves to be materialists, but behind them all across the East was a great Moslem revival. Europe had based its hopes on material efficiency. Now the East appealed to the things of the spirit. It was a revival for war and power and to show that Islam is superior to all other systems and that the Moslems are superior to all other men. It had within it the pent-up resentment of the East against the domineering superiority of the West.

In this Turkey had been involved. She had headed the revolt of the East. She had hurled back Europe. She had been proclaimed the champion ; but at heart she had little interest in these things. Turkey was, as she had been before, a select oligarchy of capable men who now used the pliant phrases of democracy to cloak their power, and who ruled a dull obedient people.

I pondered on these things by Galata Bridge. The city lay all round me asleep and full of black shadows

and clear white light. Pera and Galata were grey and formless. Stambul faced me, and up over Stambul, against the sky, towered the great monstrous domes of the mosques threatening and heavy beside their delicate minarets. I wondered whether that great spiritual revival would swamp Turkey and advance beyond it into Europe.

Suddenly I realized that throughout all these years, passive, trying to help a little, but detached, untouched, not vitally affected, I had watched events from without. I had seen let loose the soul-tearing passions of war, patriotism, fanaticism and hatred. Round me were new nations born of strivings and agony, full of unknown forces, pushing on into the blind future like rough and unshapely primitive animals clawing and groping brutally in the twilight of the jungle in a primeval world. I had seen men when roused by the great forces of the spirit go to death merry and glad, or fiercely to do foul bestialities. I had seen great Empires torn into rough bits which lay with all their edges raw and aching. I had seen great men, in the detachment of power, shrug shoulders, make a caustic jest and laugh at some stupendous error and then hasten away to a rich dinner, while all across the world came the sighs of millions starving.

Detached and aloof I felt as one who has found an ants' nest, broken by some clumsy unheeding foot, and who passes a summer's afternoon watching with lazy interest all the panic and the bravery, the hurryings, and the mass strivings of the seething pigmy world beneath him.

I knew that God too must be detached. I searched

among all the strivings and the gropings for some hope of the futures that were to come of all these agonies. If God too watched a broken world with lazy interest, then the stupendous, but saving, jest of the Universe died in despair and blasphemy.

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For me the end had come. The gendarmerie control was over. The Turks were in full possession and wanted no help. The Allied Army of Occupation, now impotent, was waiting impatiently the hour of embarkation. Before dawn on the last day I was up and away to catch the early train, and I waited while Galata Bridge was being closed. I wondered on Turkey and whether her future rested with the Turks. It seemed but just to put away prejudice and hatred and watch even with sympathy the efforts of the new state.

In 1916 I had come, unprotected, in the hour of defeat, to Turkey. I had seen the destruction of the enemy and the rise of the British Empire to the heights of a stupendous victory. Unprotected I crept away now in the hour of defeat and disillusionment.

Beyond St. Stephano I looked back. The Marmora was full of little waves in the morning breeze. Skutari and my area lay in haze. Santa Sophia squatted beside the Old Seraglio. The Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent towered close by the War Office and the Watch Tower. Over all lay a mist, white in a clear dawn, that made a pearl-coloured shroud to this city of many dreams. Across the view the rugged old walls of ancient Byzantium stood boldly out.

For a while I had seen greatness. For a short while I had walked with the British Empire in the valley of the shadow of death.

I had watched a New Nation burst its way out, as in a volcanic eruption, through the ashes and ruins of the Ottoman Empire, hurl aside its enemies who clung clogging round it as restraining as cold lava, and then in a flame of white enthusiasm set out to seek its own destiny. Whether it carried merely destruction, or might fashion itself into something clean and good, I could not see.

The train drew out. I left behind me all this new life struggling in the chaos of creation. I left behind me much that had made good dreaming; and so came once more to Europe and to face other adventures.

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